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CONFIDENTIAL.

(8202.)

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8186.]

205

1903.

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[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8186.]

1903.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
1	Sir N. O'Conor ..	14	Jan. 9, 1903	British religious, charitable, and educational establishments in Turkey. Every prospect of satisfactory solution of question ..	1
2	„ „ ..	21	12,	Founding of new German Colony near Jaffa. Transmits despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem respecting	1
3	Mr. Whitehead ..	41	26,	Attempt to assassinate the Armenian Patriarch at Koum Kapou	3
4	„ „ ..	42 Confidential	27,	Intended rising of Armenians. Despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis. Rising prepared by Sasun revolutionists ..	3
5	„ „ ..	48	28,	British religious, &c., establishments in Turkey. Iradé issued granting necessary authorization to, with a few exceptions. Refers to No. 1	4
6	„ „ ..	51	30,	Haifa–Damascus Railway. Chief engineer of Mecca Railway has left Damascus to make preliminary survey of	5
7	„ „ ..	57 Confidential	Feb. 3,	Unification of Ottoman Debt. Measures taken to carry out scheme. Memorandum by Mr. Babington Smith	6
8	„ „ ..	58	3,	Bagdad Railway. Favourable report submitted to Sultan for immediate construction of Konia–Eregli section	17
9	Sir N. O'Conor ..	35 Tel.	21,	Bagdad Railway. Contract for first 200 kilom. will be signed in a few days	17
10	Mr. Whitehead ..	82 Confidential	15,	Haifa – Damascus Railway. Progress of transfer of to Ottoman Government. Alleged strategic aims of line. Despatch from Consul-General at Beirut respecting. Refers to No. 6	18
11	Sir F. Lascelles ..	59	28,	Anatolian Railway. Extract from "North German Gazette" reporting an agreement with the Deutsche Bank for construction of	19
12	Sir N. O'Conor ..	42 Tel.	Mar. 7,	Mobilization of Russian troops in Caucasus. Telegram from Consul at Batoum reporting rumour of	19
13	.. .. ..	104 Confidential	Feb. 26,	Armenian revolutionaries. Despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis. Resignation of the Vali of Bitlis ..	20
14	„ „ ..	113	Mar. 3,	Armenian insurrection. Representations to the Porte as to suppression of. Telegram from Bitlis respecting	20
15	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	73	12,	Armenian insurrection. Approves his language. Refers to No. 14	21
16	Sir N. O'Conor ..	120	9,	Bagdad Railway. Iradé issued approving contract for a loan providing for construction of Konia–Eregli section. Transmits contract	22
17	„ „ ..	124	10,	Bagdad Railway. Transmits copy of Statutes of Company as signed by Minister of Finance and representatives of Anatolian Railway	29
18	„ „ ..	125 Confidential	6,	Bagdad Railway. Conversation with M. Testa as to attitude of Russia	34

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
19	Sir N. O'Conor ..	145	Mar. 23, 1903	Armenia. Conversation with Grand Vizier as to heavy taxation of population. Arrangement with Persian Government as to Kurdistan	35
20	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	92	April 2,	Armenia. Approves language (see No. 19) ..	35
21	Question asked in the House of Commons (Mr. Gibson Bowles)	..	7,	Communications between His Majesty's Government and foreign Governments on subject of Bagdad Railway	36
22	To Sir C. Scott ..	86	14,	Bagdad Railway. Russian Government regard scheme as likely to give Germany a dangerous preponderance in Asia Minor. Conversation with Russian Ambassador ..	36
23	Mr. Hills to Mr. Balfour	..	9,	Haifa–Damascus Railway and extensions. German-Belgium intrigues. Hedjaz line to be a strategical one, and to run only as far as Akabeh on Red Sea.	37
24	Sir N. O'Conor ..	183	14,	Action of Sheikh Muhammad Sadik in Mosul vilayet. Despatch from Vice-Consul at Van. Nestorian Archbishop captured ..	38
25	„ „ ..	188	14,	Bagdad Railway Company. Meeting held to constitute. Transmits extract from "Levant Herald"	39
26	India Office ..	..	20,	Dispatch of Turkish troops to Bussorah ..	40
27	To Sir C. Scott ..	96	22,	Bagdad Railway. Conversation with Russian Ambassador. Impossible for His Majesty's Government at present to give assurances of support to promoters	40
28	Debate in the House of Commons	..	23,	Bagdad Railway. His Majesty's Government's policy towards	41
29	Question asked in the House of Commons (Sir J. Leese)	..	23,	Bagdad Railway. Convention granted by Turkish Government to	42
30	Nil.				
31	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	105	23,	Haifa–Damascus Railway. Transmits No. 23 for observations	43
32	Sir N. O'Conor ..	208	22,	Bagdad Railway. Relations with Mersina–Adana line, who ask for assistance of His Majesty's Government in their transactions	43
33	„ „ ..	212	22,	Armenia. Probable disturbance during Easter. Warning received by Armenian Patriarch	44
34	Sir J. Kennedy ..	26 Confidential	22,	Bagdad Railway. Russian Minister says his Government is unfavourable to on political and commercial grounds	44
35	Three questions asked in the House of Commons (Mr. Gibson Bowles)	..	29,	Bagdad Railway. As to His Majesty's Government's policy towards	45
36	Nil.				
37	Sir N. O'Conor ..	224	May 1,	Nestorian Church. Roman Catholic intrigues. Two despatches from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van	48
38	„ „ ..	231	4,	Bagdad Vilayet. Two tours made by Consul-General Newmarch. Perso-Turkish frontier near Mr. Davey's oil enterprise	50

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
39	Sir N. O'Conor ..	237	May 5, 1903	Haifa-Damascus Railway. Transmits copy of Agreement handing line over to Ottoman Government	62
40	Sir F. Lascelles ..	110	8,	England and Persian Gulf in connection with Bagdad Railway. British interests fully recognized in Germany	63
40*	Sir N. O'Conor ..	254	12,	Persecution of native Protestants at Kessab. Despatch from Consul at Aleppo, and representations to Porte respecting	64*
41	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	131	23,	Persecution of native Protestants at Kessab. Approves action	64
42	Sir N. O'Conor ..	273	18,	Events in Diarbekir district. Satisfactory administration of the Vali. Report by the Vice-Consul	64
43	„ „ ..	291 Confidential	20,	Russian "scientific mission" to Van, Mosul, and Bagdad. Porte pressed by Russian Ambassador to grant permission for, to survey for a possible railway	66
44	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	139	28,	Diarbekir. Has read report with satisfaction (see No. 42)	66
45	Sir N. O'Conor ..	296	23,	Railway in Western Asia Minor. Application for concession by M. Hartmann. Details as to	67
46	„ „ ..	307	27,	Calling out of Redifs in Koniah district. Difficulties experienced. Despatch from Vice-Consul at Andana	67
47	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	69 Commercial	June 6,	General commercial situation in Asia Minor as affected by the nationality of the owners of the railways. Requests report on ..	68
48	Dr. Schumacher to Mr. Hills	..	6,	Haifa and Hedjaz Railways. Activity shown in construction of	68
49	Sir C. Greene ..	51 Commercial	15,	Bagdad Railway Company. Report as to formation of with headquarters at Zarich ..	69
50	Sir N. O'Conor ..	348	16,	Unrest in Kharput district. Arrest of several professors of American College. Representations to Porte respecting	70
51	„ „ ..	355	17,	Situation in Passin district. Improvement in. Despatch from Acting-Consul at Erzeroum	71
52	Mr. Buchanan ..	145	19,	Bagdad Railway. Reported understanding between German and French groups ..	72
52*	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	138 Tel.	26,	Pillaging of the Convent near Erzeroum. Is there any confirmation of the rumour?	72*
53	Sir N. O'Conor ..	364	24,	Armenians in Van Vilayet. Conversation with Grand Vizier, and report by Vice-Consul Tyrrell	72
54	Question asked in the House of Commons (Mr. Flynn)	..	29,	Outrages by Kurds near Erzeroum and Beun.	74
55	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	170 A	July 4,	Van Vilayet. Approves action. Refers to No. 53	74
56	Sir N. O'Conor ..	373	June 30,	Christians and Moslems at Damascus. Increasing hostility between	74
57	Sir N. O'Conor ..	377	July 1, 1903	Reported outrages near Erzeroum. Acting Consul at Erzeroum believes to be unfounded. Statement of Turkish Government respecting, and explanations of Armenian Patriarch	75
58	„ „ ..	390 Confidential	4,	Bagdad Railway. M. Delcassé has refused his assent to agreement with the Deutsche Bank	76
59	„ „ ..	387	8,	Riots at Damascus. Attributable to encouragement of Dragoman of Russian Consulate. Despatch from Consul Richards. Refers to No. 56	77
60	„ „ ..	394	13,	Anti-Christian feeling in Kharput district. Recall of the Vali. Satisfactory action of Porte has restored tranquillity	78
61	„ „ ..	401	15,	Proposed survey for Russian railway from Erivan to Persian Gulf. Refers to No. 43. Memorandum by Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell on conversation with Zekki Pasha respecting	80
62	„ „ ..	411	21,	Pillaging of Convent of Surp Agop near Erzingian by Kurds from Dersim district. Action taken by Turkish authorities ..	81
63	„ „ ..	418 Confidential	22,	Bagdad Railway. Captain Smyth's proposed journey through country to be traversed by. Interview with him	81
64	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	204	28,	Anti-Christian feeling in Kharput. Approves action. Refers to No. 60	82
65	Sir C. Greene ..	63 Commercial Confidential	27,	Bagdad Railway. Report by Consul Falck. Matter still far from being settled ..	82
66	Sir N. O'Conor ..	420	27,	Bagdad Railway. Pamphlet by Dr. Paul Rohrbach with maps. German views of the scheme	83
67	„ „ ..	421	27,	Position of the Nestorians. Nimrod's attempts to create difficulties for new Patriarch. Despatch from Vice-Consul at Van ..	87
68	„ „ ..	432	29,	Persecution of Protestants at Kessab. Refers to No. 40*. Persons in question released ..	89
69	Sir C. Scott ..	220	30,	Bagdad Railway. Commercial and political advantages likely to accrue to Germany. Article in "Novoe Vremya"	89
70	Sir N. O'Conor ..	115 Tel.	Aug. 2,	Conflict between Armenian and Turkish troops near Shenik. Proposes to send Mr. Heathcote to Moush, and speak strongly to Grand Vizier on subject	90
70*	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	149 Tel.	3,	Armenian disorders. Responsibility for them will certainly rest with the Ottoman Government	91*
71	Question asked in the House of Commons (Mr. Lucas)	..	4,	Construction of Bagdad Railway by German capital	91
72	Sir N. O'Conor ..	117 Tel.	3,	Armenia. Grand Vizier promises inquiry into reported conflict, &c. (see No. 70) ..	91
72*	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	150 Tel.	4,	Armenian disorders. Approves visit of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis to Moush ..	91*
73	„ „ ..	220	6,	Armenian Protestants at Kessab. Has learnt of his successful representations with satisfaction. Refers to No. 68	91

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
74	Sir N. O'Conor ..	438	Aug. 4, 1903	Armenia. Account of interview with Grand Vizier. Revolutionaries reported to have come from Russia. Pessimistic views of Armenian Bishop of Bitlis	91
75	„ „ ..	446	4,	Escape of the Kurdish Chief, Meressa Bey, from Medina	94
76	„ „ ..	451 Confidential	8,	Mouzaffer Pasha's policy in the Lebanon. His unpopularity. Petitions against ..	95
77	„ „ ..	454	10,	Attack by Kurds on Surp Agop Monastery. Official reports on subject. Refers to No. 62	99
78	„ „ ..	463	11,	Armenia. Turkish operations against revolutionaries in Sasun district. Refers to No. 74	100
79	„ „ ..	464	11,	Armenia. Further representations to Grand Vizier respecting the arming of the Kurdish tribes. Similar action by Russian Ambassador. His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis to leave for Moush 10th August	102
80	„ „ ..	467	12,	Kharput. Condition of, more tranquil. New Vali appointed (see No. 60)	103
81	„ „ ..	469	12,	Armenia. Colonel Maunsell's conversation with War Minister respecting operations in Sasun district	103
82	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	236	20,	Nestorians. Approves action. Refers to No. 67	104
83	„ „ ..	237	20,	Armenia. Approves language. Refers to No. 74	104
84	Consul Stevens ..	9	13,	Murder of an Armenian at Batoum	104
85	Sir N. O'Conor ..	482	16,	Armenia. Arming of Kurdish tribes in Sasun. Renewed representations to Grand Vizier. Request for removal of Vali of Bitlis (see No. 79)	105
86	„ „ ..	485 Confidential	18,	Haifa – Damascus Railway. Progress of. Hedjaz line. Supposed strategical aims of. Probable branch from Akaba to El Arish ..	106
87	„ „ ..	487	18,	Armenia. Situation in Sasun district attended with evident uncertainty and risk. Despatch from Vice-Consul at Bitlis ..	108
88	Nil.				
89	Sir N. O'Conor ..	154 Tel.	27,	Reported assassination of American Vice-Consul at Beirout	109
90	„ „ ..	158 Tel.	30,	American Vice-Consul at Beirout. Was fired at, but not killed	110
91	„ „ ..	159 Tel.	31,	Dispatch of American warships to Beirout ..	110
92	„ „ ..	523	28,	United States' Vice-Consul at Beirout. Account of affair. Special Turkish Commission sent out to inquire into affairs of the district	110
93	„ „ ..	162 Tel.	Sept. 7,	Americans at Beirout. Another fired at and wounded	111
94	„ „ ..	164 Tel.	7,	Situation at Beirout. Reported to be serious. American sailors to be landed to protect Europeans. Attitude of French Ambassador	112

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
95	Sir N. O'Conor ..	165 Tel.	Sept. 8, 1903	Beirout. Situation improving. Probable appointment of the Governor of Damascus as acting Vali	112
96	„ „ ..	107 Commercial	Aug. 31,	Railways and the commercial situation in Asia Minor. Transmits Report by Mr. Waugh (see No. 47)	112
97	„ „ ..	529	Sept. 3,	Armenia. Improved situation at Sasun and Moush. Mr. Heathcote's return to Bitlis ..	119
98	„ „ ..	530	4,	Damascus riots. Refers to No. 59. Result of trial of persons implicated in	121
99	„ „ ..	533	4,	Beirout. Account of general state of lawlessness in the town, &c. Refers to No. 92 ..	121
100	„ „ ..	166 Tel.	9,	Restoration of order at Beirout. Arrival of Vali of Damascus	123
101	„ „ ..	550	10,	New taxes in Turkish Empire. Poll tax created. Increased taxes on horses and cattle	123
101*	„ „ ..	551	10,	Situation at Smyrna. General state of disorder. Request for a warship to restore public confidence	123A
102	„ „ ..	554	10,	Armenia. Patriarch's fears as to Turkish intentions in Sasun. Interview with him. Quieter feeling at Erzeroum and Moush ..	123
103	„ „ ..	556 Confidential	11,	Beirout. Dismissal of the Vali, Reshid Bey ..	124
104	„ „ ..	168 Tel.	16,	Orders to French fleet to proceed to Syra. Possible visit to Beirout	125
105	To Admiralty ..	Confidential	19,	Smyrna situation. Transmits No. 101*. Could ship visit port at an early date? ..	125
106	Sir C. Scott ..	289	17,	Armenian outbreak in Transcaucasia. Caused by Decree affecting property held by Armenian Church	126
107	Sir N. O'Conor ..	571	17,	Armenia. Abortive attempt of revolutionaries to cross frontier in Tortoum district ..	126
108	„ „ ..	577	17,	Beirout. No satisfaction as yet obtained for attack on United States' Vice-Consul (see No. 92)	127
109	„ „ ..	581	18,	Beirout and situation at Damascus. Refusal of Maronites to return. Vali transferred to Broussa	128
110	Admiralty	Confidential	23,	Smyrna. His Majesty's ship "Formidable" can be sent at once. Refers to No. 105. ..	132
111	Sir N. O'Conor ..	173 Tel.	23,	Smyrna. Unnecessary for ship to be sent now	133
112	Consul Stevens ..	13	15,	Armenian disturbances at Elizavetpol and Tiflis (see No. 106)	133
113	„ „ ..	15	17,	Disturbance at Tiflis, and dynamite explosion at Kars	133
114	„ „ ..	16	18,	Russia and Armenian Church property. Refusal of Armenian priest at Batoum to hand over the property. Serious situation	134
115	„ „ ..	17	19,	Russia and Armenian Church property. Disturbances at Khars and Baku on 15th September. Account of	135

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
116	Mr. Findlay ..	101 Confidential	Sept. 18, 1903	Hedjaz Railway. Observations on No. 86 as to the positions of Akaba and El Arish ..	136
117	Sir N. O'Conor ..	602 Confidential	25,	Beirout. French Consul-General's action with regard to Maronite refugees	137
118	„ „ ..	603	25,	New taxes. Discontent at Erzeroum among peasant classes. Refers to No. 101 ..	139
119	„ „ ..	618 Confidential	25,	Beirout. Bad impression produced by removal of Nazim Pasha as temporary Governor-General	139
120	Mr. Spring-Rice ..	307	Oct. 1,	Armenians in Trans-Caucasia. Memorandum respecting Church property, &c., by Mr. Beaumont. Disorders at Baku	140
121	Sir N. O'Conor ..	626	1,	Beirout. Further details as to disorders and appointment of new Vali	142
122	„ „ ..	627	1,	Resignation of Russian Consul at Damascus. Has become Secretary of the Russian Palestine Society	144
123	„ „ ..	629	2,	Armenia. Reported orders to Turkish troops to attack revolutionaries. Interview with the War Minister	145
124	„ „ ..	630	2,	Reported arming of Kurds in Diarbekir district. Minister for Foreign Affairs promises to bring matter to notice of Minister of Interior	148
125	Consul Stevens ..	18	Sept. 23,	Further Armenian disturbances at Elizavetpol and Tiflis	149
126	„ „ ..	19	24,	Armenians in Trans-Caucasia. Two Proclamations distributed among working classes by the Caucasus Union of working men ..	150
127	„ „ ..	20	25,	Russia and the Armenians. Report on circumstances which have led to adoption of present drastic measures	151
128	„ „ ..	21	26,	Armenian Church and Russia. Correspondence between Russian Government and the Catholicos respecting the transfer of Church property to the State	154
129	Sir N. O'Conor ..	642	Oct. 7,	New cattle tax. Question of foreigners' liability to pay. If Porte makes formal request to Powers to accept, suggests compliance	156
130	„ „ ..	650	9,	Armenian revolutionaries. Engagement on the frontier. Turkish troops sent to Alashgird	157
131	„ „ ..	655	9,	Arrival of new Vali of Beirout	157
132	„ „ ..	657	9,	Turco-Persian frontier. Journey of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van. Report on. List of tribes	157
133	„ „ ..	658 Confidential	9,	Administration of the Lebanon. Mouzaffer Pasha's difficulties. Attitude of French Consul-General at Beirout	164
134	Sir C. Greene ..	49 Confidential	12,	Bagdad Railway. Reported agreement between French and German groups. Official participation of France assured	166
135	Intelligence Division ..	..	14,	Hedjaz Railway. Observations on proposed branch from Ma'an to Akaba and El Arish. Refers to No. 116	166

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
136	Sir N. O'Conor ..	668	Oct. 15, 1903	Beirout. Telegram sent to ex-Vali on eve of his departure by Sultan's First Secretary ..	167
137	„ „ ..	670	15,	Armenia. Fighting with revolutionaries near frontier. Despatch from Erzeroum (see No. 130)	168
138	„ „ ..	676	16,	Hedjaz Railway. Progress made with construction of. Refers to No. 86	169
139	„ „ ..	677	16,	State of Erzeroum district during last quarter	169
140	„ „ ..	681	16,	Armenia. Measures taken to meet disturbances. Calling out and arming Hamidieh regiments. Telegram from Bitlis ..	171
141	„ „ ..	684	16,	Acts of violence, &c., at Bagdad. Telegram from Consul-General Newmarch. Proposes to call attention of Porte to	171
142	To India Office (also to Board of Trade)	..	22,	New cattle tax in Turkey. Transmits Nos. 118 and 129 for observations	171
143	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	296	20,	Bagdad. Approves proposed representations. Refers to No. 141	172
144	Sir N. O'Conor ..	686	21,	Trebizond district. Unsatisfactory state of. Representations made to Grand Vizier. Composition of the Commercial Court ..	172
145	„ „ ..	687	21,	Christians at Kharput. Minister for Foreign Affairs' instructions for protection of ..	174
146	„ „ ..	704	23,	Armenia. Details of fighting on Russo-Turkish frontier. Everything now quiet. Absence of pillaging on part of the troops. Idea of offensive operations against revolutionaries at Sasun abandoned	174
147	„ „ ..	705	23,	Trial and condemnation of fourteen Ismailians at Damascus. Details as to	176
148	„ „ ..	710	23,	Armenia. Augmentation of infantry battalions of 7th Army Corps	180
149	Mr. Spring-Rice ..	364	29,	Disturbances in the Caucasus. Attack by brigands on the Governor-General ..	180
150	Sir N. O'Conor ..	712	27,	Christians at Kharput. Porte desires truth as to friction between Christians and Moslems	181
151	„ „ ..	717	29,	Armenian revolutionaries. Reported strength and organization of. Despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum	181
152	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	301	Nov. 4,	Christians at Kharput. Approves language of. Refers to No. 145	182
153	Sir E. Monson ..	585	6,	Bagdad Railway. Memorandum as to recent negotiations in Paris. M. Delcassé's opposition	182
154	Sir N. O'Conor ..	727	5,	Christian emigration from Beirout. Transmits despatch from Acting Consul-General respecting	183
155	„ „ ..	733	6,	Armenia. Correction in statement made in No. 148	185
156	„ „ ..	742	6,	Reinforcement of battalions in Erzeroum and Bitlis vilayets	185
157	„ „ ..	752	11,	Disturbances among Arabs between Bagdad and Shatt-el-Arab. Reinforcements requisitioned from Bagdad	186

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
158	Sir C. Greene ..	55 Confidential	Nov. 18, 1903	Bagdad Railway. Refers to No. 134. Complete understanding between German and French financial groups	186
159	Sir N. O'Conor ..	763	17,	Armenia. Complaints against calling out Hamidieh troops. Vali's demand for their withdrawal. Despatch from Erzeroum ..	187
160	„ „ ..	764	17,	Armenia. Revolution near Van, and fight with Turks near Delibaba	187
161	„ „ ..	779	23,	Visit of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Hodeida to Sanáa. Transmits his report on. Courtesy shown him	189
162	„ „ ..	783	24,	Sasun district. Resignation of Vali of Bitlis refused. Tension between civil and military authorities as to the policy to be pursued in	190
163	„ „ ..	790	30,	Animal tax. Exemption of fellaheen class in Sandjak of Hauran from payment of. Despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus	192
164	„ „ ..	791	30,	Situation in Beirout district. Refers to No. 121. Panic among Christians subsiding ..	193
165	„ „ ..	793	30,	Trial of Ismaïlians at Damascus. Refers to No. 147. Sentences passed referred to Constantinople	194
166	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	329	Dec. 12,	Cattle tax. Approves proposed course of action. Refers to No. 129	195
167	Sir N. O'Conor ..	810	8,	Disturbances among Arab tribes at Amaru and Nasrieh. Refers to No. 157. Despatch from Bussorah respecting with details as to	196
168	Sir E. Monson ..	661	18,	Bagdad Railway. Memorandum as to the taking over of 2,000,000*l.* of Imperial Ottoman loan by a Syndicate of the Deutsche Bank, for purposes of	196
169	Sir N. O'Conor ..	831 Confidential	15,	Bagdad Railway. Interview with Dr. Gwinner as to English attitude towards	197
170	„ „ ..	840 Confidential	22,	Attack on American Vice-Consul at Alexandretta. Despatch from Aleppo. Persons concerned to be duly punished	198
171	„ „ ..	842	23,	Jewish Colonization Association, French character of. Association enjoys status of British Company. Despatch from Beirout respecting	199
172	„ „ ..	843	23,	Bagdad Railway. Meeting of the Board. Eight new Directors appointed. New Turkish loan of £T. 200,600 from Deutsche Bank	200

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 8186.]

No. 1.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 19.)

(No. 14.) *Constantinople, January* 9, 1903.

My Lord,

SINCE the beginning of June, when I presented to the Sublime Porte the *note verbale*, as authorized by your Lordship in your telegram No. 75 of the 31st May, requesting the recognition by Imperial Firman of certain British religious, charitable, and educational establishments in Turkey, I have been constantly urging the Imperial Government to send me a reply complying with our demand, and I took an opportunity at an interview which I had on the 5th instant with the Minister for Foreign Affairs to again press the matter.

Tewfik Pasha informed me, in reply, that the Council of Ministers had on the previous day sent a mazbata to the Palace reporting in favour of compliance with my request, and that there was every prospect of a satisfactory solution of this question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 2.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 19.)

(No. 21.) *Constantinople, January* 12, 1903.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of an interesting despatch received from His Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem reporting on the founding of a new German Colony near Jaffa.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 2.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 79.) *Jerusalem, December* 8, 1902.

Sir,

HAVING observed in the "Times" weekly edition of the 5th September last, that it was reported that the German Ambassador at Constantinople had obtained a Concession from the Ottoman Government for a railway and a seaport in Palestine, I took the opportunity, during a visit which I paid to Jaffa in October last, of collecting some information from German residents and others in that place on the subject.

From all accounts, the paragraph in the edition of the "Times" above referred to was not confirmed, but it is possible that the securing of a Concession such as that alluded to has been in contemplation.

There are four important German Colonies at the present moment in existence in Palestine, a detailed description of which would necessitate a digression from the main object of this report. I shall accordingly allude to them briefly.

The largest and most flourishing is the Colony at Haifa, numbering some 500 souls, which was founded by a certain Dr. Hoffman, who emigrated to Palestine about forty years ago at the head of a sect consisting principally of Würtembergers, and in response to religious conviction, which determined him and his followers to settle in the Holy Land.

The second is the German Colony of Jaffa, founded by a M. Hardegg, a companion of Dr. Hoffman, and consists of about 230 individuals, most of them engaged in trade.

The third is an agricultural Colony at a place called Sarona, situated somewhat over a mile to the north of Jaffa, and numbers 360 souls. With the exception of a few of its members who are engaged in the manufacture of wine, these colonists are agriculturists; and since the creation of the Colony, have wrought great changes and improvements in the surrounding country.

The fourth is a German Colony near Jerusalem, containing some 300 individuals, also followers of Dr. Hoffman above mentioned. They are mainly occupied in earning a living as small traders and shopkeepers in Jerusalem.

A fifth Colony, however, is now being founded in the district of Jaffa, and has received the encouragement and support of the German Emperor, the King of Würtemberg, and members of the German aristocracy. I am informed that the Emperor has contributed 10,000 marks towards its establishment out of his private purse, the whole cost of founding the Colony being estimated at from 8,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*

The situation of the new Colony is in the Plain of Jaffa, about 9 miles to the east of that town, and comprises lands purchased from the villages of Yahûdiyeh, Et Tireh, and Rantieh. 5,500 "donnums" (1 "donnum" = ·224 acre) were bought from the inhabitants of the first of these villages; 1,684 "donnums" from those of the second village; and 1,700 from those of Rantieh—in all, 8,884 "donnums" or 1,995 acres.

In order to avoid paying high prices, competition, and attracting public attention, the Germans purchased the above-mentioned lands quietly through two influential natives of Jaffa, who acquired the property in their own names, and afterwards transferred it to a Commission of Germans, whose President is a certain Christo Hoffman. The average price paid was about 16*s.* per "donnum."

Several of the German colonists from Jaffa, Sarona, Jerusalem, and Haifa, have invested capital and become landowners in the new Colony, besides other Germans who are expected to come from Germany and elsewhere. Already three families have arrived, two being German families settled in Russia, and the third, a family direct from Germany. Others are expected to arrive soon; but the work of constructing farmhouses, or cottages, clearing the ground, &c., has begun, and ere long a new Colony equal in size, if not larger than the German Colonies already established, will come into existence. The Turkish officials, I understand, hearing of the projected Colony, endeavoured to raise obstacles both in the way of the purchase of the land and its transfer to the Germans, which necessitated an appeal to the German Embassy at Constantinople, and orders, I am informed, were in consequence sent by the Porte to the authorities in Palestine to offer the necessary facilities for the formation of the settlement.

The existing German Colonies at Haifa and in the Province of Jerusalem have, it cannot be denied, been of considerable benefit to the country by improving the state of agriculture, spreading civilized ideas among the natives, and promoting trade and commerce; and the creation of a new Colony of intelligent and industrious Germans will still further increase the prosperity of Palestine. Under these circumstances, it is not unlikely that the German Government should desire to encourage German enterprise by obtaining a Concession for a railway and securing a suitable port on the coast as its terminus.

In my despatch No. 46 of the 16th September, 1898, I had the honour to report that a rumour was current at the time with reference to the cession to the Germans of the ancient town of Cæsarea, on the sea-coast, for the purpose of founding a new Colony there. As, however, no port exists at Cæsarea, it would be practically useless as the terminus of a railway, and the only place where there is a good harbour and which otherwise would be available—in the event of the German Government seriously contemplating the acquisition of a seaport on the coast of Palestine—is Haifa.

I beg to inclose herewith a map showing the position of the new Colony.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 2.

Map.

[Not printed.]

No. 3.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 2.)

(No. 41.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 26, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that an attempt was made on the (6th) 19th instant, the Feast of the Epiphany, on the life of the Armenian Patriarch, Mgr. Ormanian, while His Beatitude was officiating at the morning service at the Church of the Patriarchate at Koum Kapou. The assassin, Agop by name, chose a moment when His Beatitude was turned towards the altar to fire three revolver shots, only one of which took effect, the bullet striking the Patriarch in the back below the shoulder blade and passing upwards through the body without touching any bone or organ. The wound, I am happy to say, is not considered to be dangerous, and Mgr. Ormanian is already on the way to recovery.

His Beatitude's assailant was immediately seized by the nearest members of the congregation and so roughly treated that when handed over to the police he had to be removed on a stretcher.

Various reports as to the motives of the crime are current, but from the best authenticated account it would seem that the deed was done in revenge for the refusal of Mgr. Ormanian to use his influence to obtain a situation for Agop; it is, however, also said that the criminal is a member of a revolutionary Committee which desired to get rid of a Patriarch who had shown himself powerless to protect his flock. The real facts will, no doubt, come out at Agop's trial.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 4.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 2.)

(No. 42. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 27, 1903.*

WITH reference to Sir Nicholas O'Conor's despatch No. 549 of the 17th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, stating that he has received information of an intended armed rising by Armenians which is being prepared by a party of about forty revolutionists in Sasun. The movement is to be contingent on the turn which events may take in Macedonia next spring.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 1. Confidential.)
Sir, *Bitlis, January 10, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegram of the 16th December, I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency the following information respecting the apparent intentions of the Armenian revolutionists in this vilayet. My informant in the present case, an Armenian, who called on me a day or two ago, ostensibly in reference to private business, hesitated a good deal before he came to the point, his fear being that I should acquaint the Governor-General with what I had heard, or that the British Embassy would inform the authorities at Constantinople. The Vali's inaction

in regard to the disturbances in 1901 proves that he is not the man to take common-sense precautions of his own motion against a possible outbreak, and I therefore felt free to tell my informant that I should not of my own accord repeat what he might have to say to me, to the Vali or anyone else at Bitlis. His anxiety on this score and the tone in which he imparted his information seem to me to illustrate the confusion of ideas—or perhaps the perplexity—in the minds of Armenians here, to which I alluded in my despatch No. 2 of the 29th January last, a confusion arising from a latent sympathy with the revolutionists, tempered by a wholesome dread of the consequences of any revolutionary outbreak. On the whole, I incline to the belief that the present information is not intended as a blind, though it may possibly have been suggested indirectly by the revolutionists in the hope that it will of itself lead to the enforced application of reforms which are at present a dead letter.

According to my informant there are about forty revolutionists in Sasun, divided into three bands, all armed to the teeth. They have succeeded in bringing some 500 rifles with ammunition across the frontier, and secreting them at Van, Akhlat, and other places. Their plan is to act according to events in Macedonia. If an outbreak takes place there in the spring, they will follow suit by suddenly attacking isolated military posts or taking possession of strategic points in the neighbourhood of Mount Nemrud and the west side of Lake Van, in Gharzan or in the south of Sasun, and at Akhlat. At the same time, some thousands of malcontents will cross the Russian frontier into Alashgird. The fixed purpose of the revolutionists is this time to provoke such a slaughter of their race that the Powers will be compelled to intervene once for all.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No. 5.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received February 2.*)

(No. 48.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 28, 1903.*

WITH reference to Sir Nicholas O'Conor's despatch No. 14 of the 9th instant, and to previous correspondence on the subject of the recognition by the Imperial Government of certain British religious and charitable establishments in the Ottoman Empire, I have the honour to inclose copy of a *note verbale* from the Sublime Porte, stating that an Imperial Iradé has been issued granting the necessary authorization for the establishments named in the list sent in by His Majesty's Embassy on the 2nd June, 1902, with the exception of three schools at Beirut, in the Lebanon and in Syria, with regard to which further inquiries are being made, and of the "Smyrna Rest."

I have ascertained from the Ministry of Public Instruction that the three schools with regard to which a reservation is made by the Sublime Porte are the British Syrian School at Bekfaya (Lebanon), the School for Boys founded in 1874 at Nusf-Jebil by the Church Missionary Society (Beirut), and the School for Boys founded in 1884 at Gabary by the Church Missionary Society (Beirut). The reservation, however, was only made because the names of the places where these schools are situated do not quite agree with those given in the list supplied by His Majesty's Embassy, and the Inspector of Schools stated to Mr. Marinitch, in the presence of the Minister of Public Instruction, that they were duly included in the list of institutions sanctioned by Imperial Iradé which was sent to the Ministry by the Grand Vizier, and that the reservation is therefore of no importance.

The omission of the "Smyrna Rest" was not agreed to by His Majesty's Ambassador.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Note Verbale.

LE Ministère des Affaires Étrangères a eu l'honneur de recevoir, avec les pièces annexées à la première, les deux notes verbales que l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique a bien voulu lui adresser les 2 Juin et 5 Novembre, 1902, pour demander la reconnaissance par le Gouvernement Impérial des établissements religieux et de charité Anglais existant dans l'Empire Ottoman.

En réponse, le Ministère Impérial s'empresse d'informer l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté le Roi, qu'un Iradé de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan accorde l'autorisation nécessaire à ceux des établissements mentionnés dans les listes annexées à la première des notes verbales précitées qui existent actuellement, à l'exception des trois écoles sises au Liban, à Beyrouth, et en Syrie, et du "Smyrna Rest," pour lesquels la Sublime Porte se réserve de prendre une décision suivant le résultat des enquêtes qui sont effectuées en ce moment à leur égard.

Quant aux terrains sur lesquels des bâtisses ne sont pas encore élevées, les formalités nécessaires seront accomplies conformément aux dispositions de la Loi en vigueur sur la matière, lorsque des demandes seront faites pour la construction d'édifices sur les dits terrains.

Des communications dans ce sens ont été faites aux Départements Impériaux de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique.

Sublime Porte, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères,
le 24 Janvier, 1903.

No. 6.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received February 9.*)

(No. 51.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 30, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch received from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting that Herr Meissner, whose contract as chief engineer of the Mecca Railway has just been renewed, has left Damascus for Haifa to make a preliminary survey of the route of the projected Haifa–Damascus Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.)
Sir, *Damascus, January 15, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 96 of the 18th November last, I have the honour to report that Herr Meissner, the chief engineer of the Hedjaz Railway, has renewed his contract with the Turkish Government for a further term of two years, the latter having made certain concessions in virtue of which Herr Meissner will enjoy a greater freedom of action and an exemption from a somewhat irritating form of criticism and dictation, of which he has had reason to complain in the past. As a token of his approval of the work hitherto accomplished, the Sultan has recently conferred on him the 2nd Class of the Order of the Mejidieh and the Gold Commemorative Medal of the Hedjaz Railway, while Mme. Meissner received at the same time the 2nd Class of the Order of the Shefakat.

On the 11th instant Herr Meissner left Damascus for Haifa accompanied by Mukhtar Bey, one of the principal Turkish engineers of the Hedjaz line, a sub-engineer (sous-chef de section), and seven Turkish officers of the corps of engineers of this Army

Corps, with a view to making a preliminary examination of the best route to be followed for the projected Haifa-Dera'a-Damascus Railway.

I understand that as soon as this task is accomplished the work of construction will not be long delayed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—I have just learned that it is the Gold Medal of the Liakat Order that Herr Meissner has received, not the Hedjaz Railway Medal.

W. S. R.

No. 7.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 57. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February 3, 1903.*

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 346 of the 23rd July, 1902, and to previous despatches on the subject of Turkish finance, I have the honour to report that the Turkish Government are now making great efforts to carry out, without delay, the Unification Scheme which has been under consideration for some time past. The urgency of the matter is due to the fact that the Administration of the Public Debt now have a reserve of more than £ T. 600,000 at their disposal, and anticipate exceptionally large receipts this year owing to the payment of the Eastern Roumelian Annuity, so that unless the Unification Scheme is accepted before the end of the financial year, the Council will propose an increase of ¼ per cent. in the interest paid to the bondholders. This would raise the price of the stock, and render conversion more difficult. Some days ago a telegram was sent to Paris asking that, in M. Auboyneau's absence, a special Delegate should be sent to negotiate, but I now hear that M. Auboyneau is expected to arrive from Paris on the 7th instant, and will probably bring the revised Unification Scheme with him.

I am informed that all opposition to the conversion appears to have ceased, and that the various financial groups, the Ottoman Bank, the Deutsche Bank, and the several Palace cliques seem to be working in harmony.

Selim Pasha, one of the most strenuous opponents of the Unification Scheme (owing to personal hostility to Saïd Pasha, or, perhaps, to Russian influence), has now been induced, by the usual methods, to join the majority in favour of it. This may account for a long visit he paid to M. Zinoview on the 28th ultimo, presumably to explain his *volte-face*, as Russia is opposed to the scheme. On the other hand, the French Ambassador is said to be strongly urging the Ottoman Government to adopt it.

The advantages which the Turkish Government expect from unification is that it will consolidate the debt into one uniform stock, and will reduce it to about £ T. 32,000,000; also that the Government would obtain a share (as much as 75 per cent. is mentioned) of any increase of revenue which may result from a modification of the Tariff, whereas by Article 8, section 3, of the Decree of Mouharrem, any such increase would benefit the Public Debt only.

If unification is carried out the Turkish Government hope eventually to obtain as much as £ T. 800,000 per annum from this source, to be applied to the kilometric guarantee for the Bagdad Railway, which is in German hands. It is possible that this explains Russian opposition to the Scheme.

Moreover, any excess in the assigned revenues now goes to the reserve and sinking funds of the Debt; but, after unification, it would go to the Ottoman Government, and as the latter would then have a direct interest in it, they would assist the Public Debt Administration in the collection, and revenue would increase. A difference which exists between the Public Debt Administration and the Government in regard to stamp duties would also thereby disappear, and the revenue from this source increase considerably.

I have the honour to inclose copy of a Memorandum which has been confidentially communicated to me by Mr. Babington Smith, British Delegate on the Public Debt, on this subject.

He points out in it that the Council of Foreign Bondholders would be willing, if if the ¼ per cent. increase of interest is allowed and unification is not carried out, to

make arrangements for sharing surplus revenues with the Ottoman Government which would be as advantageous to the latter as those proposed under the present Scheme.

Meanwhile the Imperial Treasury is in urgent and immediate want of money, and for the payments customary at the Courban Bairam before the end of the financial year, about £ T. 300,000 will be required.

The Government are trying to obtain money from various sources, and have approached the Tobacco Régie for an advance of £ T. 100,000. It is reported to-day that they have actually obtained £ T. 70,000.

There are also again rumours that the Deutsche Bank is about to carry out the conversion of the Fisheries Loan, mentioned in the last paragraph of Mr. de Bunsen's despatch above referred to, and that by this operation, which would reduce the rate of interest from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent., and the payments to the sinking fund from 2 per cent. to 1 per cent., the Turkish Government hope to obtain a margin of from £ T. 600,000 to £ T. 700,000, which would cover the Baïram payments and leave some £ T. 300,000 for the requirements of Macedonian reform.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 7.

Memorandum by Mr. Babington Smith.

The Present Position of the Ottoman Debt.

THE present moment is a somewhat critical one in the history of the Ottoman Debt, and in order to make clear the situation it is necessary to enter into some detail.

I.—*The Decree of Mouharrem and its Defects.*

"The Decree of Mouharrem" (signed the 8th (20th) December, 1881) gave effect to the arrangement under which certain revenues were assigned by the Ottoman Government for the benefit of its creditors, and the Council of the Debt was instituted for the purpose of collecting and administering those revenues. The capital of the loans included in this arrangement was reduced in proportions varying according to the circumstances of each loan, and the reduced capital was classified in four series (A, B, C, D), with identical rights as to interest, but different rights as to the application of the sinking fund. A first charge of £ T. 590,000 per annum on the assigned revenues was created in favour of the "Priorities," and the "Lots Turcs," or Lottery Bonds were also included separately in the arrangement. The following Table gives the nominal capital of the four series under the Decree of Mouharrem, and also of the Priorities and of the Lottery Bonds; while the last column gives, approximately, the nominal capital which will remain outstanding on the 14th March, 1903, that is to say, at the end of the current financial year:—

	Nominal Capital under Decree of Mouharrem.	Nominal Capital outstanding March 14, 1903 (approximate estimate).
	£ T.	£ T.
Priorities	8,609,640	7,300,000
Series A	7,902,259	..
„ B	11,265,153	4,456,000
„ C	33,915,762	27,945,000
„ D	48,365,235	44,617,000
Total series	101,448,409	77,018,000
Lots Turcs	15,632,547	13,521,300
Total	125,690,596	97,839,300

Under the Decree of Mouharrem the service of the Priorities is a first charge of £T. 590,000 on the revenues, four-fifths of the balance of the net receipts being applied to interest and the remaining fifth being applied as sinking fund. A minimum rate of interest of 1 per cent. on the series was practically guaranteed by the stipulation that the sum required for payment of interest at this rate should have priority over the sinking fund. The result of these provisions is that a net receipt of £T. 2,053,512 is necessary in order to pay 1 per cent. on the series and the corresponding sinking fund in full, while a net receipt of £T. 2,419,390 is necessary to pay interest at 1¼ per cent. and the corresponding sinking fund. These sums would be distributable as follows:—

	£T	Interest at 1 per cent.	Interest at 1¼ per cent.
		£T.	£T.
Priorities	430,000		
Economy resulting from conversion of the Priorities applied as Extraordinary Sinking Fund	160,000	590,000	590,000
⅘ths of remainder, equal to 1 per cent. or 1¼ per cent. on nominal capital of £T. 117,081,000 ..		1,170,810	1,463,512
⅕th of remainder applied as sinking fund ..		292,702	365,878
Total		2,053,512	2,419,390

The following Table gives the net receipts for the last ten years, and the estimated receipts for the current year:—

	£T.
1892–93	2,184,545
1893–94	2,189,405
1894–95	2,196,319
1895–96	2,138,957
1896–97	2,069,216
1897–98	2,101,530
1898–99	2,131,082
1899–1900	2,154,702
1900–1901	2,087,909
1901–1902	2,126,591
1902–1903 (estimate)	2,500,000

It will be seen that since 1892-93 the net receipts have always exceeded the above-named sum of £T. 2,053,512. Of the surplus, one-fifth has formed part of the sinking fund, and the remaining four-fifths have been set aside as a reserve for increasing the rate of interest. This reserve at present amounts to £T. 638,530.

The interest is paid half-yearly, and cannot be raised by fractions smaller than ¼ per cent. per annum. The provisions of the Decree relating to the rate of interest to be paid are not free from obscurity. There is, however, no doubt that the rate is to be fixed half-yearly by the Council of the Debt, and, in my opinion, it is clearly laid down that, if the receipts of the year are sufficient to raise the interest by ¼ per cent., the Council is obliged to make the payment at the higher rate.

The sinking fund is usually applied by the purchase of bonds in the market. So long as the interest remains at 1 per cent., 66⅔ is the maximum limit of the price that can be paid for the purchase of bonds. That is to say, if the market price rises above this level, amortization is effected by drawings and by repayment of the drawn bonds at 66⅔. If the rate of interest is increased to 1¼ per cent., the limit of 66⅔ is automatically raised to 75.

This arrangement has, on the whole, worked well during the twenty years of its existence. The revenues have largely increased under careful and honest administration; the bondholders have received their 1 per cent. regularly. Series A, and nearly two-thirds of Series B have been extinguished, whilst Series C and D have been materially reduced, with the result that the market value of the bonds remaining in circulation is much higher now than it was when the arrangement first came into force. As yet, however, the bondholders have not realized the hope held out to them of obtaining a rate of interest higher than 1 per cent. The Ottoman Government, too, has derived very solid advantages from the regularity introduced into that portion of its finances with which the Council of the Debt is concerned. Ottoman credit stands far higher in the

European markets than it ever did before, and is little inferior to that of Austria or Italy.

There is, however, one serious defect in the arrangement from the point of view both of the bondholders and of the Government, namely, that the Government has no share in the increase of the assigned revenues, however great that increase may be. The result is that the Government has no direct interest in promoting the growth of the revenues. On the contrary, its interest lies in the other direction, since any increase of receipts would take more from the tax-payer, and give more to the bondholders, and, far from benefiting the Imperial Treasury, would, in consequence of the increase in the market value of the bonds, retard, to some extent, the amortization of the Debt. This absence of motive for co-operation on the part of the Government is prejudicial to the bondholders, since the assigned revenues can only reach their full development if the Council of the Debt can obtain the assent of the Government, both to administrative measures and also to necessary amendments of the law. This consideration applies with special force to the new resources which would be produced by the revision of the Customs Treaties. This revenue is assigned by the Decree of Mouharrem for the service of the Debt, but under existing conditions there is no prospect of realizing it; for so long as the assignment remains in full force the Government has no interest in bringing about the revision of the Treaties and thereby raising a large amount of revenue for the benefit, not of the Imperial Treasury, but of the bondholders. It is evident, therefore, that the Council of the Debt, as representing the interests of the latter, has good reason to endeavour to modify the existing arrangement.

The Ottoman Government, on the other hand, having urgent need of new sources of revenue, has been brought to consider the means of obtaining for itself the whole or part of the increase of the revenues assigned to the Debt; and, in a similar manner, those who are interested in the Bagdad Railway, and who desire to find revenues hitherto unpledged and available for a guarantee, have been brought to consider the same problem.

II.—*Unification.*

The solution which has been suggested from time to time for a number of years is the unification of the Debt. The scheme put forward about a year ago by M. Rouvier, representing a group of French and German banks, contemplated the conversion of the bonds of the existing series into 4 per cent. bonds of a uniform character, at the rate of £T. 66 of the new security for £T. 100 nominal of Series B; £T. 37½ for £T. 100 nominal of Series C; and £T. 35 for £T. 100 nominal of Series D. These new bonds were to have a sinking fund of 1 per cent. The annuity necessary for their service, together with that of the Priority Bonds, which were to remain on their present footing, and that of the Lottery Bonds, which were to receive an increased sum annually, would have amounted to £T. 2,290,000, and was to be provided from the sources of revenue already assigned by the Decree of Mouharrem. From any receipts above this sum, whether derived from the existing revenues of the debt or from those which, though assigned to the debt by the Decree of Mouharrem, have not as yet been realized, 25 per cent. was to be deducted to form an extraordinary sinking fund, and the remaining 75 per cent. was to belong to the Government.

This scheme was the subject of prolonged negotiations. These ultimately fell through, mainly owing to the fact that the Government was not prepared to guarantee the annuity of £T. 2,290,000. As will be explained below, events subsequent to the abandonment of the negotiation have now brought about its renewal in a somewhat modified form.

From the point of view of the bondholder, the effect of the Rouvier scheme would be to give him some immediate advantage in return for the abandonment of possible increases of value in the future. Thus, to take the case of Series C as an example, the holder of £T. 100 nominal of Series C would, after conversion at the above-mentioned rate, receive £T. 1½ per annum as interest instead of £T. 1. The immediate market value of his holding would also have been raised; but, on the other hand, he would have been required to abandon the possibility of further increases of interest up to the maximum of 4 per cent. fixed by the Decree, and the rate of repayment would have been limited to 37½ in place of the existing rates of 66⅔, 75, or 100, according to the rate of interest paid. It is evident that the answer to the question, "Ought the bondholders to accept unification?" would depend upon the value placed upon these future expectations, and that this value would vary with the estimate

formed of the future yield of the assigned revenues, and, in particular, of the probable date at which it would be possible to raise the rate of interest from 1 to 1½ per cent.

The question of the treatment of the Lottery Bonds was not dealt with in detail in the Rouvier scheme. It presents special difficulties; but, as it does not directly interest the British investing public, I do not discuss it here.

III.—*The Alternative: Participation.*

It is possible to remedy the above-mentioned defect in the Decree of Mouharrem in a simpler and more satisfactory manner than by means of the unification of the Debt. The Ottoman Government, the Council of the Debt, and the Syndicates (with, possibly, a reference to the bondholders at a public meeting) might enter into an agreement to modify the Decree of Mouharrem so as to give to the Government a share, perhaps one-half, of any surplus yielded by the net revenues of the Debt, above a fixed point determined by the average of, say, the last three years. By such an agreement the Government would be entitled to a share of the revenues which at present are entirely alienated, and would, therefore, have a sufficient motive for co-operating with the Debt in the improvement of those revenues. The Debt would, it is true, abandon a portion of that to which it has a right; but that which it would give up will not come into existence unless a direct interest is given to the Government; and "half-a-loaf is better than no bread." In return for the concession of a share in the revenues, and in order to secure for the bondholders the payment of interest at 1½ per cent. and the permanent maintenance of this rate, the Government would be asked to agree to give to interest at 1½ per cent. the priority over sinking fund payments which the Decree gives to interest at 1 per cent.

This scheme, which I have explained and advocated in my published Reports, has the advantage of simplicity. The alterations in the Decree of Mouharrem would be slight. The proposal has also the advantage of economy; for it could be carried out by agreement between the parties concerned without the intervention of those financial groups which expect to derive very large profits from a financial operation such as the unification of the Debt. This very merit, however, of economy is possibly a disadvantage from the practical point of view, since the financial establishments which are interested in the unification are not likely to exert their influence in its favour; and since, it may be added, the scheme does not provide the means of meeting that "secret service" expenditure which facilitates the passage of important measures in Turkey.

This proposal has the support of the Council of Foreign Bondholders, and I have reason to believe that it would be approved by the Dutch and Belgium Syndicates, which are also represented by the British Delegate. The principal of a division of the increases of revenue was accepted by all the Syndicates with reference to the stamp revenue, in connection with definite proposals recently submitted to the Government for the amendment of the law; and I have little doubt that, were the question of unification out of the way, the general application of the same principle would be admitted by all.

IV.—*The Raising of the Rate of Interest.*

In October 1902, the Bulgarian Government, having successfully floated a loan, paid to the Debt the sum of £T. 342,000, representing two years' arrears and the current year of the Eastern Roumelian Annuity. The result of this payment and of the improved yield of certain other revenues is that the net receipts of the current year will, in all probability, amount to about £T. 2,500,000, and will almost certainly exceed the sum of £T. 2,419,390 necessary for paying interest at 1½ per cent. and the corresponding sinking fund. In view of this fact, the Council of Foreign Bondholders wrote to me on the 30th October last requesting me to bring again under the consideration of the Council of the Debt the question of increasing the rate of interest on the series. In December I communicated to my colleagues a note, of which a copy is attached to this Memorandum, pointing out that if the revenues reached the above-mentioned amount the Decree of Mouharrem required us to pay interest at the higher rate; and that if the revenues remain at their present level, the reserve fund is sufficient to enable us to maintain the increased rate for eleven or twelve years. I proposed that, at the time of raising the rate of interest, we should offer to the Sublime Porte to use our influence with the Syndicates in order to admit the Imperial Government to a share in all increases of revenue on the bases which I have described above. I added a suggestion, which, however, does not form an indispensable part of the proposal, as to the means of raising an immediate loan for the Turkish Treasury, on the ultimate security of the future increases of revenue which would fall to the share of the Government.

At the same time, the public interested in Turkish bonds has become aware of the high level that will be reached by the revenues this year, and there has been some discussion in the press of the prospect of an increased rate of interest.

The Ottoman Bank and its associates at once perceived that if the rate of interest were raised, it would no longer be possible to carry out the unification of the Debt, since the bondholders would no longer have any inducement to convert at the proposed rates. They therefore at once determined, in concert with certain other French banks and the Deutsche Bank, to make fresh proposals for unification, in the hope of carrying them through before the end of February—the date at which it will be necessary to fix the rate of interest for the March coupon. They evidently calculate that they are able to bring strong pressure to bear on the Government by threatening them with the raised rate of interest if unification is not accepted. At the beginning of January, M. Gaston Auboyneau, Director-General of the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople, intimated to the Sublime Porte his readiness to enter into negotiations on behalf of the Ottoman Bank and its associates, and the Government replied that they were willing to examine the question. The scheme to be presented has been under discussion between the Ottoman Bank at Paris and the Deutsche Bank. Matters have been delayed, however, in the first place, by the illness of M. Gaston Auboyneau, and, in the second place, by the death of his father, M. Frank Auboyneau, of the Ottoman Bank at Paris. Various points have been under discussion between Paris and Berlin, and there have been differences of opinion, especially on the question of whether a settlement of outstanding questions about the Bagdad Railway should or should not be a preliminary to unification. It was only on the 2nd February that two alternative schemes were handed to the Grand Vizier by the representative of the Ottoman Bank.

In the meantime the days are passing, and it appears doubtful whether it will be possible to conclude the negotiations in three weeks; and in three weeks or very little more it will, as I have said, be necessary to fix the rate of interest for the March coupon. Even if an agreement is reached between the Ottoman Government and the Ottoman Bank, it will be necessary for the latter to obtain the agreement of the Syndicates representing the bondholders in the various countries. They are able to count upon the support of the French, probably of the German Syndicate, and possibly of the Austrian. As yet they have not approached the Council of Foreign Bondholders or the Italian or Dutch Syndicate. I may add that the Council of Foreign Bondholders is, I believe, of the opinion which I have above expressed, namely, that the raising of the interest and the division of the increases of revenue would be more advantageous to the bondholders than the unification of the Debt, unless the unification were carried out on lines far more favourable to the bondholders than those which have hitherto been proposed.

Another financial operation of less importance is also under consideration at the present moment. Negotiations are actively proceeding for the conversion of the "Fisheries" Loan.

This loan of £T. 1,650,000 with interest at 5 per cent. and 2 per cent. sinking fund, was issued by the Deutsche Bank in 1888, the annuity necessary for the service of the loan amounting to £T. 115,000. A new loan could now be issued on the guarantee of the same revenues with a lower rate of interest and sinking fund, the net produce of the loan sufficing to repay the outstanding balance of the old loan, amounting to a little over £T. 1,000,000, and to provide a considerable sum (not less than £T. 800,000) in cash. The condition imposed by the Deutsche Bank is the signature of the Convention for the prolongation of the Eskishehr–Konia line for some 200 kilom. to Eregli (the first section of the Bagdad line), including the assignment of tithes to the amount of £T. 110,000 per annum for the guarantee of this section. Having regard to the urgent needs of the Government, it is probable that this arrangement will be completed.

(Signed) H. BABINGTON SMITH.

February 3, 1903.

Inclosure 2 in No. 7.

Note communicated by Mr. Babington Smith to his Colleagues, December 1902.

The Rate of Interest on the Series of the Ottoman Debt.

(Confidential.)

IN order to pay interest at the rate of 1¼ per cent. from the receipts of a single year, it is necessary that the net receipts should reach the total of £ T. 2,419,390, distributed as follows:—

	£ T.	£ T.
Priorities	430,000	
Extraordinary Sinking Fund (economy on the conversion of the Priorities)	160,000	590,000
1¼ per cent. on nominal capital, £ T. 117,081,000 (four series and Lots Turcs)		1,463,512
Sinking fund		365,878
Total		2,419,390

Unless some unexpected occurrence should intervene, the net receipts of the current year will exceed the above amount, and will probably reach a total of £ T. 2,500,000.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider whether for the coupon of March next the Council should maintain the customary rate of 1 per cent. or whether it should for the first time raise that rate to 1¼ per cent.

I.

The provisions of the Decree of Mouharrem on this subject are as follows:—

"Article 10. The net produce of the revenues . . . . . shall be applied integrally on the 1st (13th) September and the 1st (13th) March of each year to the payment of the interest and the amortization of the debt.

* * * * *

"The Council will determine at the proper time, in conformity with the principles above established, the rates of interest and amortization payable each half-year, so that the payments due on the 1st (13th) September and the 1st (13th) March may be always punctually satisfied.

"It will have the right to reserve, out of the sums disposable for the service of interest, the fractions necessary for equalizing the amount of interest in the following half-years.

"Article 11. If the sum disposable for the service of interest, divided by the amount representing ¼ per cent. of the said reduced capital of the Debt, leaves a fraction, such fraction shall be reserved for the service of interest in the following half-year."

The interpretation of these clauses has given rise to divergent views. The Council, following the opinion of the majority of the jurists consulted, has not considered itself bound to pay interest at the rate of 1¼ per cent. so soon as the reserve fund sufficed, together with the revenues of the year, to make up the necessary amount. This decision was based on the principle that an increase in the rate of interest lasting only a short time would give rise to fluctuations of the market and to disappointments in the future, and would therefore be injurious to Turkish credit and to the true interests of the bondholders.

The Sublime Porte, on its part, took measures to communicate to the Council on the 5th (18th) February, 1895, a clear and precise statement of its views. This declaration is so important that I quote its text in full:—

"The order of the day includes the fixing of the rate of interest to be paid on the capital of the Ottoman Public Debt on the 1st (13th) March next. On this subject his Excellency the Imperial Commissary says, for the information of the Council, that, by virtue of instructions which he has received from the Sublime Porte, it is his duty to declare to the Council that the general dispositions of the Decree of Mouharrem ought to be interpreted in the following manner:—

"The rate of interest can only be increased by ¼ per cent. when the annual revenues applicable to interest show a surplus sufficient to add an additional ¼ per cent. to the interest of the same year. Until that time arrives fractions smaller than ¼ per cent. must be reserved, in order to equalize the amount of interest in the following half-years.

"His Excellency Mourad Bey adds that, having regard to the progressive increase of the revenues of the Administration, the Sublime Porte is convinced that it will not be long before the annual receipts will permit the payment of the additional ¼ per cent. under the conditions above laid down."

At the present time the situation indicated by the Imperial Government is realized. The revenues of the current year will be sufficient for the payment of the ¼ per cent.; and, having regard to the above-quoted declaration, it certainly cannot be contended by the Imperial Government, at any rate, that the Council would exceed its duties in fixing the rate of 1¼ per cent.

The interpretation of the Government appears to me, indeed, to be that which agrees most closely with the text of the Decree. Article 11 requires that fractions smaller than ¼ per cent. should be reserved. That implies that a fraction equal to, or greater than, ¼ per cent. should not be reserved—or, in other words, that the distribution of the additional ¼ per cent. should be made so soon as the revenues of the year suffice for that purpose. This interpretation can scarcely be avoided if Article 11 is read with the first paragraph of Article 10: "The net produce of the revenues shall be applied *integrally*," &c.

It is true that another paragraph of Article 10 gives to the Council the right of reserving the fractions necessary for equalizing the amount of interest in the following half-years, and that the Council, in the exercise of the right thus given, has believed that it was acting in the interest of the bondholders in refusing to give them an increase of interest which would be short of duration. It seems to me doubtful, however, whether this provision can apply to fractions larger than ¼ per cent.; and, in any case, the fixity which the Council has thought it necessary to secure can only be a reasonable prospect of maintaining fixity during a series of years. The very nature of the assigned revenues makes it impossible to obtain mathematical and absolute fixity.

My conclusion is, then, that in accordance with the text and the spirit of the Decree of Mouharrem, it is the duty of the Council to fix the rate of interest at 1¼ per cent. if the revenues of the year are sufficient to provide the necessary amount. I admit, further, that the provisions of the Decree point to the importance of equalizing the rate of interest in the following half-years.

II.

It is desirable, therefore, to examine the situation from a practical point of view.

Whatever may be the correct interpretation of the Decree, it would not be beneficial to the bondholders to raise the rate of interest if that rate must be lowered again after a comparatively short interval. It is necessary, therefore, to make some estimate of the prospects of our revenues for the future.

I assume as my basis that the net receipts of the current year, will be £ T. 2,500,000; that in future years the annuity of £ T. 114,000 will be paid regularly on account of the Eastern Roumelian Tribute; and that the other revenues will reach the same total as that assumed for the current year, the result being a total net receipt of £ T. 2,272,000. For the current year the distribution would be:—

	£ T.	£ T.
Priorities and Extraordinary Sinking Fund		590,000
Ordinary Sinking Fund (⅛th of £ T. 1,910,000)		382,000
Interest—	£ T.	
First half-year, 1 per cent.	585,405	
Second half-year, 1¼ per cent.	731,756	
		1,317,161
Reserve—		
For increasing the rate of interest on the series	189,000	
Lots Turcs: Special account	27,800	
		210,839
Total as above		2,500,000

To the reserve fund for increasing the rate of interest on the series, which at present stands at £ T. 698,536, there would be added £ T. 183,009 as above, and also the interest received during the year, which may be estimated at £ T. 18,000, making a total of £ T. 339,545.

	£ T.
For the following years, assuming that the net receipts are £ T. 2,272,000, there will remain for the service of the series and the Lots-Turcs, after deducting £ T. 590,000 for the Priorities and Extraordinary Sinking Fund	1,682,000
Deducting 4th for Sinking Fund	336,400
There remains for interest	1,345,600
The payment of 1¼ per cent. requires	1,463,512
The deficiency to be met by means of the Reserve Fund is, therefore ..	117,912
Of this amount, however, 7/8 belong to the Lots-Turcs, and are represented by the special account of the Lots-Turcs. Deducting, therefore	15,564
There remains to be met out of the Reserve Fund	102,348

Assuming that the interest earned by the reserve fund will be on the average 3 per cent., the position of this fund on the 1st (14th) March of each year will be as follows :—

	£ T.
1st (14th) March, 1903	339,545
Interest, 1903–1904	25,186
	364,731
Amount to be withdrawn to make up the interest of 1¼ per cent.	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1904	762,383
Interest, 1904–1905	22,871
	785,254
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1905	682,906
Interest, 1905–1906	20,487
	703,393
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1906	601,045
Interest, 1906–1907	18,031
	619,076
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1907	516,728
Interest, 1907–1908	15,501
	532,229
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1908	429,881
Interest, 1908–1909	12,896
	442,777
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1909	340,429
Interest, 1909–1910	10,212
	350,641
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1910	248,293
Interest, 1910–1911	7,448
	255,741
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1911	153,393
Interest	4,601
	157,994
Amount to be withdrawn	102,348
1st (14th) March, 1912	55,646

It is, therefore, only after the expiration of ten years that it would become impossible to maintain the rate of 3¼ per cent.

There is, however, another factor which it is necessary to take into account. A large part of the reserve fund is invested in bonds of Series C and D. In consequence of the payment of the additional ¼ per cent, it is to be expected that the value of these bonds would be higher at the time when they would have to be realized than at the time when they were purchased. It is impossible to make any exact calculation of the profit which the reserve fund would derive from this increase of value, but I estimate that it would be sufficiently great to prolong the above-mentioned period of ten years to eleven or even twelve years at the least.

It is to be hoped that the Eastern Roumelian Tribute will be paid regularly, or, even if there were some deficiency under this head, that it would be made up by the increase of the other revenues. If this were not the case, that is to say, if the Eastern Roumelian Tribute were entirely in default, and if the other revenues showed no increase at all on their present total of £ T. 2,158,000, a calculation similar to that given above shows that the amount to be withdrawn each year from the reserve fund in order to make up the interest on the series would be £ T. 181,510, and it would not be until the 1st (14th) September, 1908—that is to say after five and a-half years—that the rate of interest would have to be lowered again. If we take into account the probable profit on the investments, the period would be at least six years.

It seems to me, therefore, that under the present conditions the consideration which had the most weight in deciding the Council to maintain the rate of 1 per cent. no longer exists. It will be possible to maintain an increased rate during a number of years which will not be less than six, even in the very unfavourable conditions of my second hypothesis, that is to say, assuming the absolute default of the Eastern Roumelian Tribute and the total absence of any increase in the other revenues. If the less pessimistic estimates of my first hypothesis should be realized, the increased rate could be maintained during eleven years at least. There is, therefore, no longer any question of rapid fluctuations from year to year, and the Council would incur, it seems to me a grave responsibility in refusing to the bondholders the increase of revenue which could be granted to them immediately.

III.

An increase in the rate of interest might be regarded by the Government with less satisfaction than by the bondholders. The maximum rate for amortization would be at once advanced in accordance with the provisions of the Decree from 66·66 to 75. This fact, as well as the increase of interest, would raise the value of the series, and retard proportionately the operation of the sinking fund.

Further, this increase in the market value of the series would render impossible, for the moment at least, any operation similar to that which was proposed by M. Rouvier.

Evidently these two results would not be agreeable to the Government, and its dissatisfaction might have an unfortunate effect upon the services of the Administration. I do not think that we need fear any forcible seizure of the assigned revenues, for in following such a course the Sublime Porte would, in the first place, injure its own credit, and, in the second place, would find itself at issue with the Powers. But, without going as far as that the Government would be able to give its officers throughout the Empire to understand that they were to exercise their influence in a manner hostile to the Debt. This would create difficulties for us, and might to a certain extent diminish our revenues.

In any case the ill-will of the Government would be a misfortune for the Administration, which has always desired to follow the road of co-operation and conciliation, while defending at the same time the interests of those whom it represents. I ask, therefore, whether it will be possible to find a plan which would give to the Government the advantages which it sought to obtain by means of unification, that is to say, above all, a share in the increases of the revenues assigned to the Debt, which would compensate the retardation of the sinking funds, and which would place immediately in the possession of the Ottoman Treasury a considerable sum of ready money.

The plan which I explain below seems to me to comply with these conditions. It would consequently give us the means of averting the drawbacks which might arise from the dissatisfaction of the Government.

IV.

The principle of a division between the Government and the Debt of the increases in the assigned revenues has already been accepted by the Council and by the Syndicates, who were consulted with regard to the application of this principle to the Stamp Revenue. There is no reason to limit the application of the principle to a single revenue, and, in my opinion, it would be desirable to offer to the Government a share in the net increases of all the revenues at present collected by the Debt, as well as a share in the revenues which are not yet in the possession of the bondholders, namely, the revenue to be realized by the general application of the Law of *Patentes*, and the increased customs revenue to be produced by the revision of the Treaties of Commerce.

The proportion in which the Government should share in these revenues would have to be determined by negotiation. As regards the second category, we might accept the division proposed by M. Rouvier, namely, 75 per cent. to the Government and 25 per cent. to the Debt; but in the case of the revenues already collected by the Administration, the proportion ought to be more favourable to the bondholders.

The only concession to be made by the Government in return for this share in the increased revenues would be to accept for interest at 1¼ per cent. the priority over sinking fund payments which already exists for interest at 1 per cent. in virtue of Article 11 of the Decree. This privilege of priority would only come into operation if the reserve fund were exhausted. It would completely secure the permanence of the rate of 1¼ per cent.

If, in consequence of the admission of the Government to a share in the revenues, the Debt could count on the genuine co-operation of the Porte not only for the administration of the revenues, but also for the amendments to be made in the Laws and Regulations, large sources of revenue would be created not only for the bondholders, but also for the Imperial Government. These sources, however, would only be realized in the future, and the Government would desire, perhaps, to discount them, in order to provide for the urgent needs of the present time. There is, however, a serious obstacle to the attainment of this wish, since no one would be prepared to lend money on the guarantee of revenues which do not as yet exist.

The Council and the Syndicates could aid the Government to surmount this obstacle by agreeing to guarantee the interest of a loan, say, of £T. 1,000,000 by providing the necessary sum from the Extraordinary Sinking Fund, the money thus withdrawn to be restored to this fund subsequently by the application of the Government's share of the increased revenues.

In order to explain the precise bearing of this proposal it is necessary to enter into detail.

The annual economy of £T. 100,000 produced by the conversion of the priorities is applied in accordance with the Agreement made between the Imperial Government, the Council of the Debt, and the Syndicates to the amortization of the series. The original amount is increased by the interest on amortized bonds, and the sum accruing annually to the Extraordinary Sinking Fund thus established reaches at the present time a total of about £T. 240,000. It is clear that the application of this sum can be modified by a new Agreement between those who were parties to the original Agreement. It would be possible, therefore, if such an Agreement were brought about, to guarantee interest at 4 per cent. on a loan of £T. 1,000,000 by taking £T. 40,000 a-year from the above-mentioned amount of £T. 240,000. The loan, having a guarantee as good as that of the priorities, could be issued at a very favourable rate. The repayment of the sums withdrawn from the Extraordinary Sinking Fund for the payment of the interest would constitute a first charge on all sums due to the Imperial Government in respect of its share in the increases of the Debt revenues, and the repayment of the capital of the loan would constitute a second charge on the same moneys. In this way the Government would receive at once the sum of £T. 1,000,000 without placing the burden of a single piastre on its present resources. The sums necessary for paying the interest on this million would be provisionally taken from the Extraordinary Sinking Fund; but as it may be estimated that in a very few years the Government's share in the increases of the revenues would largely exceed £T. 40,000, these temporary withdrawals would be quickly repaid, and the sinking fund would lose nothing. The capital of the loan would also be repaid in a comparatively short period, especially if the revision of the Commercial Treaties were carried out. The Government would then enter into possession of its share in the increases of revenue free from any mortgage.

It has been said above that it would be necessary to find the means of compensating the retardation of the sinking fund produced by the increased value of the bonds.

It is evident that if the sums available for amortization increase in the same proportion as the value of the series, there would not be any retardation, and it may be expected that, under the conditions explained above, this increase of the sums available for sinking fund would be produced in two ways.

In the first place, the sinking funds, ordinary and extraordinary, are in part furnished by means of the interest on cancelled bonds. This interest represents for the present year a sum of about £T. 228,000, and the payment of the additional ¼ per cent. would of itself increase this sum by 25 per cent., that is to say, by £T. 57,000.

In the second place, the division of the increases of revenue ought to augment to no small extent the annual revenues of the Debt, and one-fifth of every such increase goes to the sinking fund. It is impossible to make any estimate, however rough, of the amount of these increases, but it is evident that, by the action of these two causes, it is quite possible that the sinking fund might benefit to the extent of 15 or 20 per cent., and that the growth in the value of the bonds to be purchased would be thus fully counteracted, as regards its effect on the rate of amortization of the Debt.

(Signed) H. BABINGTON SMITH.

December 1902.

No. 8.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 58.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 3, 1903.

WITH reference to Sir Nicholas O'Conor's despatch No. 536 of the 5th December last and to previous despatches on the subject of railway enterprise in Turkey, I have the honour to report that the Council of Ministers are stated to have submitted a favourable Report to the Sultan for the immediate construction by the Anatolian Railway Company of the Konia–Eregli section of the Bagdad Railway. This section is about 200 kilom. in length, and the kilometric guarantee upon it would amount to £T. 100,000. To meet this tithes are to be assigned, but as no payments are to be made on this account until the section is completed, and as the Angora section of the railway is paying its way and the tithes assigned for its guarantee will therefore be available for the new section, the Council of Ministers believe that no fresh charge on the provincial revenues will result.

I understand, however, that the Russian Embassy is strongly criticising and opposing this proposed extension, on the alleged grounds that Turkey is not justified in further pledging her revenues. This extension is also mentioned in Mr. Babington Smith's Memorandum inclosed in my despatch No. 57, Confidential, of this day's date.

There are rumours, also, of other railway extension projects; one for a line from Uskub to Scutari, in connection with the junction between the Roumanian and Servian Railway systems, by a bridge over the Danube; another for a railway from Monastir to Durazzo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 9.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February* 21, 1903.

IT is expected that the contract for the first 200 kilom. of the Bagdad Railway will be signed in a few days. The Convention between the French and German groups signed in Paris on the 15th or 16th reserves our participation.

No. 10.

Mr. Whitehead to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 23.)

(No. 82. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 15, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 51 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, reporting on the progress of the transfer of the Haifa–Damascus Railway and of the alleged strategic aims of the line.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Mr. Whitehead.

(No. 15. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beirut, February 7, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch from Mr. Monahan, reporting the transfer of the Haifa–Damascus Railway to the Ottoman Government, together with the following information communicated to me by him in a private and confidential manner.

Mr. Monahan writes:—

"I have the following from a trustworthy informant:

"Hamdi Pasha and the officers with him believe that the railway called the Hejaz Railway is really intended to be a strategic railway to the Gulf of Akaba for the conveyance of troops to Arabia in case it should be necessary to maintain the Sultan's authority in that country by extraordinary force against, perhaps, the English.

"The Haifa Railway and Haifa port, both of which it is fully intended to construct with as little delay as possible, all in connection with the strategic scheme.

"A plan of the projected line to Akaba, that is in continuation of the so-called Hejaz line which is now being made, which plan is in the possession of one of the above-mentioned officers with Hamdi Pasha, has been seen by my informant.

"My informant requests me to report the above to you in this way so that no one here may know of it except myself, and not in one of my series of official despatches."

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Consul-General Drummond Hay.

(No. 15. Confidential.)
Sir, *Haifa, February 4, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 11 of the 24th ultimo, relative to the transfer of the Haifa–Damascus line to the Turkish Government, I have the honour to report as follows:—

Herr Meissner and the Turkish officers, except a naval Captain and naval Lieutenant who remain here with Hamdi Pasha, left for Damascus on the 27th ultimo, travelling along the line. The engineer of the vilayet, the Commissaire of Beirut Harbour, and an Armenian engineer with them, who had come here together for the business of the transfer, all returned to Beirut on the 29th ultimo. A local German engineer, named Voight, has been engaged. He is now with six Mussulman workmen "setting out," that is, surveying and pegging, some land for the railway in the immediate neighbourhood of Haifa, where the direction of the line is, I understand, intended to be slightly changed from the existing one. The line is to be a narrow-gauge one, so the existing 8 kiloms. of rails will have to be narrowed. A Commission of local officials and Notables, under the presidency of the Kaimakam, has been nominated, but

it has not begun work yet, and its functions have not yet been determined. Herr Meissner before leaving spoke of soldiers, locomotives, and materials being expected, but much scepticism now prevails.

Hamdi Pasha and his officers have been studying the old plans of the Haifa Harbour, and have given the impression that it is intended to make a harbour.

A full receipt has been given to Dr. Schumacher for the stores of the line, only a small question remaining as to technical instruments which were sent to London a year ago. But Hamdi Pasha, after the transfer of the stores, demanded in writing the transfer of the "land of the railway," to which Dr. Schumacher, in a letter of the 20th ultimo, replied that he must refer the question to Mr. Hills, so that no receipt has yet been given for the "land," that is, the line itself, and any adjacent lands that belong to it. Dr. Schumacher confidentially tells me that, in accordance with instructions from Mr. Hills, he will not hand over, until other instructions from Mr. Hills oblige him to do so, certain gardens near Haifa for which Mr. Hills paid about 4,000*l.*, and as which it can at any rate be argued that they are the property of Mr. Hills, and not of the Railway Company. The legal position is not clear, the title-deeds of most of the gardens being still in the name of one Mohammed Taha (who it may be mentioned has Russian protection as an ex-cavass of the Russian Consular Agency), though he took the purchase money from Mr. Hills. The military authorities, it would seem, though I am not sure, did not sanction the transfer. Part of the gardens is absolutely needed for the Haifa terminus of the line, and the gardens will all rise greatly in value if the line is ever made; so that, until at least the whole of the purchase money for the line and Concession has been paid by the Turkish Government to Mr. Hills, an interesting question is likely to pend with regard to these gardens.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. H. MONAHAN.

No. 11.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 59.)
My Lord, *Berlin, February 28, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to bring to your Lordship's notice the following paragraph with respect to the further construction of the Anatolian Railway, which appeared lately in the "North German Gazette":—

"An agreement has been come to between the Turkish Government and the Deutsche Bank respecting the further construction of the Anatolian Railway. The financial means are to be provided by an issue of State bonds. A loan of 54,000,000 francs (2,160,000*l.*) is contemplated for the costs of the first portion to be begun, viz.: Konia–Eregli, and this is to be guaranteed out of revenues from the tithes of Konia, Aleppo, and Urfa. At the same time an agreement respecting the conversion of the so-called Fishery Loan was arrived at. The decisions of the Ministerial Council on this subject are awaiting the sanction of the Sultan."

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 12.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 42.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 7, 1903.*

I REPEAT, at the request of His Majesty's Consul-General at Odessa, the following telegram which he has received from His Majesty's Consul at Batoum:—

"I hear, on good authority, that a decision has been practically taken for mobilization in about a fortnight hence in the Caucasus. I understand that a partial concentration at Batoum and other places on the frontier is being secretly prepared, and that a forward movement into Asia Minor is contemplated for next April."

No. 13.

Sir N. O Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 104. Confidential.)
Constantinople, February 26, 1903.
My Lord,

WITH reference to the despatch No. 42 of the 27th ultimo from this Embassy, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis respecting Armenian revolutionaries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2. Confidential.)
Bitlis, January 24, 1903.
Sir,

I AM informed that thirty-two Armenian revolutionists, other than those mentioned in my despatch No. 1 of the 10th January, arrived about a fortnight ago in the Commune of Chilkhur (or Chirkhor), between Mount Nemrud and Van Lake, and that, after a couple of days' stay, about half proceeded to Van, while the rest came on to the neighbourhood of Bitlis. Half a company of regulars went up the Bitlis gorge on the 18th instant, in the direction, as I understand, of Chilkhur, but returned empty-handed during the night after fruitless attempts to get through the snow.

The following items of information have all the appearance of mere bazar gossip, and I confess myself unable to hazard an opinion as to how far they may approximate to the truth.

It would appear that about two months ago the Mutesarrif of Mush reported direct to Constantinople that there were Armenian revolutionists in Sasun, and requested instructions. He was thereupon asked whether he could effect their capture in the space of two or three days. On his replying that not even two or three weeks would suffice, he was instructed to do nothing.

It would appear that the revolutionists have an understanding with the Sheikh of Nevi (in Hekkiari), who has a following of about 2,000 Kurds. In accordance with this compact, the Sheikh will help or at least allow armed revolutionists to cross the Persian frontier undisturbed. I have passed on this piece of intelligence to Captain Tyrrell.

It would appear that the revolutionists are secretly manufacturing rifles in Russia, and have already brought some of the output to villages in Mush Plain.

The Vali of Bitlis, Hüsni Bey, has sent in his resignation. His Excellency tells me that he hopes to recuperate his health by residing quietly at Constantinople for a year or two. Rumour has it that his Excellency is anxious to leave before the public peace is disturbed again, and that he has already drawn his salary for February. Should his resignation be accepted, it will, I venture to add, be greatly to the advantage of this province if an upright and at the same time a strong man is appointed as his successor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No. 14.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 113.)
Constantinople, March 3, 1903.
My Lord,

WITH reference to Mr. Whitehead's despatch No. 42 of 27th January, I have the honour to report that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, of which the following is a paraphrase:

"There are some fifty or sixty armed revolutionaries now moving about in the villages of the Plain of Mush. Their head-quarters are at Shenik, in the Sassun district, whence they sometimes venture to enter Mush itself in disguise. Their purchases in the towns are made for them by peasant women, and money is being extorted by them from the Armenian notables of Bitlis and Mush.

According to their own statements, their object is to bring about an outbreak in the spring should the reforms secured for Macedonians not be applied also to some extent in these districts, and they are awaiting the signal from the Committees in Europe. The peasants are readily persuaded that they may just as well sell their remaining possessions to purchase arms as be crushed under the weight of the taxes they are called on to pay, especially those which being levied *en bloc* on the basis of a former population fall with increasing severity on the individual as the population diminishes by emigration, murder, and imprisonment.

In spite of the reports that the forces at Mush are to be increased in the spring by the addition of some ten or fifteen battalions, the revolutionists are boasting that they can wear out the troops. Their somewhat theatrical exploits at the monastery of Arakh about a year ago have, no doubt, given them some prestige, and they are being driven to recklessness by the brutality and exactions of the gendarmerie and the Kurds; and it would seem that it is generally understood among the Armenians of Sassun and the plains that a desperate movement is to be made.

Although every Circassian and Kurd owns a fire-arm, if only a flint-lock, the Armenians cannot—when the revolutionaries are unable to supply them with arms—buy them, no matter with what precaution, from Mussulmans without the authorities being aware of it, and it may well be that the Government is allowing matters to come to a head so as to have a pretext for suppressing the movement with all the barbarities of former years, even whether the Kurds are allowed to join the Authorities or not."

I have communicated to the Sublime Porte the reports I have received as to the state of affairs in the Bitlis district, pointing out that the disturbed state of these regions is due not only to the lawlessness of the Kurds but also to the exactions of the Government officials, who are relentless in exacting fines and arrears of taxes which the poverty-stricken inhabitants are absolutely unable to pay. The people are still smarting under the terrible punishment of 1894–5, and would not, I feel sure, endanger all they now possess unless driven to it by the insecurity of their situation and the want of support and assistance from the authorities. I could not for a moment suppose, I said, that the Imperial Government was aware of an insurrectionary movement and purposely allowing it to come to a head in order to crush it more effectually.

Tewfik Pasha replied that he had no recent information from Armenia, but it certainly was not the idea of the Government to allow an insurrectionary movement to develop which could only be suppressed with bloodshed and danger, and that he would at once inquire of the Grand Vizier whether he had any information similar to mine.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 15.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 73.)
Foreign Office, March 12, 1903.
Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 113 of the 3rd instant, relative to the distressed condition of the Armenian population of the Vilayet of Bitlis, and the danger of an insurrection in that district.

The language which you held to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject has my approval.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 16.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received March* 16.)

(No. 120.)

Constantinople, March 9, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Mr. Whitehead's despatch No. 58 of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that an Imperial Iradé was issued on the 2nd instant approving the Contract for a loan which is to provide for the construction of the Konia–Eregli section of the "Chemin de Fer Konia–Bagdad–Golfe Persique."

This loan is for 54,000,000 fr., or 2,160,000*l.*, bearing interest at 4 per cent., with payments at the rate of ·087538 per cent. to the sinking fund, being the amount necessary to extinguish the loan in ninety-eight years, the period of the Concession.

The annuity required for the service of this loan amounts to 2,207,270·52 fr. per annum, corresponding to the guarantee agreed upon of 11,000 fr. for each of the 200 kilom., with a small excess to meet other charges, and this annuity is to be provided, in the first instance, by a further charge of £ T. 106,000 upon the tithes of the Vilayet of Konia and the Sandjaks of Aleppo and Urfa, which are already engaged to the extent of £ T. 161,500 under previous Contracts.

The issue price is not fixed, the Anatolian Railway accepting the bonds for the Bagdad Company, in formation, in lieu of payment of the kilometric guarantee.

I have the honour to inclose copies of the Contract and prospectus of this loan, which I owe to the courtesy of Mr. Babington Smith, the British Delegate on the Council of the Public Debt.

The Contract was signed on the 5th instant by M. Gwinner, of the Deutsche Bank, on behalf of the Company, and accepted by the Council of the Public Debt, who will be charged with the collection of the tithes, on the 7th instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 16.

Contrat de l'Emprunt Impérial Ottoman 4 pour Cent du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, Série Première. Valeur nominale, 54,000,000 *fr.*

ENTRE le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, représenté par agissant en vertu d'un Iradé Impérial en date du , d'une part; la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, agissant au nom et pour le compte de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, en formation, pour laquelle elle se porte fort, représentée par , d'autre part; la Deutsche Bank, représentée par intervenant pour ce qui la concerne dans le présent Contrat; et M. , Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, ès qualités intervenant pour ce qui concerne la susdite Administration dans le présent Contrat, il a été arrêté et convenu ce qui suit:—

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman ayant décidé la création d'un emprunt, dont l'annuité pour intérêts et amortissement sera l'équivalent de la garantie kilométrique de 11,000 fr.—par an et par kilomètre, accordée pour la première section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia, du Chemin de Fer de Konia–Bagdad–Golfe Persique, selon l'Article XXXV de la Convention conclue en date du , entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, les conditions du dit emprunt seront arrêtées par les Articles qui suivent.

L'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane est chargée de l'encaissement et de la gestion des dîmes affectées par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman au présent emprunt et intervient à ce titre.

La Deutsche Bank intervient en représentation du groupe financier—pour lequel elle se porte fort—qui sera chargé du service de l'emprunt

Ceci exposé, il est stipulé:—

Article 1. Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman créera conformément au modèle ci-annexé 108,000 obligations au porteur de 500 fr., soit 408 marks, soit 20*l.*, soit 240 florins de Hollande, soit £ T. 22, nominaux chacune, représentant la somme de 54,000,000 fr., soit 44,064,000 marks, soit 2,160,000*l.*, soit 25,923,000 florins de Hollande, soit £ T. 2,376,000 nominaux. (Voir l'Article 6.)

L'Emprunt portera le nom "Emprunt Impérial Ottoman 4 pour Cent du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, série première."

Art. 2. Les obligations du présent emprunt rapporteront un intérêt de 4 pour cent l'an, payable semestriellement au choix du porteur en francs, ou en marks, ou en livres sterling, ou en florins de Hollande, ou en livres Turques, le 2 Janvier (N. S.), et le 1er Juillet (N. S.), de chaque année à Constantinople, Paris, Berlin, Francfort-sur-le-Mein, Londres, Amsterdam, et dans d'autres villes de l'Europe (à désigner éventuellement par la Deutsche Bank). Le premier coupon attaché à ces obligations portera l'échéance du 1er Juillet, 1903 (N. S.), et comprendra l'intérêt du premier semestre de 1903. Il est bien entendu que les intérêts au taux de 4 pour cent à partir du 1er Janvier, 1903, jusqu'à la date de l'émission, seront déduits du montant à payer sur le dit coupon.

Les obligations du présent emprunt seront remboursables au pair en francs, ou en marks, ou en livres sterling, ou en florins de Hollande, ou en livres Turques, au choix du porteur en une période de quatre-vingt-dix-huit ans comptés à partir du 2 Janvier, 1903 (N. S.), au moyen d'un amortissement de 0,087,538 pour cent l'an, calculé sur le capital nominal de 54,000,000 fr. soit 44,064,000 marks, soit 2,160,000*l.*, soit 25,920,000 florins de Hollande, soit £ T. 2,376,000, et devant s'effectuer par voie de rachat au-dessous du pair par les soins de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et par tirages au sort annuels au pair, si des rachats ne peuvent pas s'effectuer au-dessous du pair.

Les tirages auront lieu deux mois avant l'échéance du coupon au 2 Janvier (N. S.), de chaque année et le paiement des titres amortis sera effectué simultanément avec le paiement de ce coupon.

Le premier tirage aura lieu le 2 Novembre, 1903 (N. S.).

Les tirages auront lieu par les soins et aux bureaux de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane à Constantinople.

Le résultat de chaque tirage sera communiqué par la dite Administration, au plus tard le lendemain du jour des tirages, par lettre chargée à la Deutsche Bank, et publié, de même que toutes les annonces concernant le service du présent emprunt, par les soins de la Deutsche Bank aux frais du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman dans deux journaux de Constantinople, deux journaux de Berlin, un journal de Francfort-sur-le-Mein, deux journaux de Paris, et un journal de Londres.

Art. 3. Le présent emprunt est remis par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman à la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie qui l'accepte pour compte de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad en formation, en paiement de la subvention kilométrique, accordée par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman pour la première section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia du Chemin de Fer de Konia–Bagdad—Golfe Persique, dont la Concession est accordée à la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie par Convention du .

Art. 4. Les frais de confection et d'impression des obligations seront à la charge du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman. La Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie aura le droit de réunir en un seul titre plusieurs obligations. Dans ce cas elle devra soumettre, avant la confection des titres, au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman la liste des types qu'elle voudra faire confectionner. L'approbation par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman du modèle des titres définitifs aura lieu dans un délai de quinze jours à partir de la date de sa présentation par la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie au Ministère des Finances à Constantinople. A défaut de réponse dans le délai ci-dessus fixé, le modèle présenté sera considéré comme ayant obtenu l'approbation du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Art. 5. Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, afin de faciliter la prompte émission du présent emprunt sur les places Européennes, autorise la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie à faire émettre par les banques chargées de l'émission, des scrips pour la totalité de l'emprunt. Ces scrips ne seront pas sujet à une approbation préalable du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Art. 6. Les obligations définitives porteront la griffe du Ministre des Finances de l'Empire Ottoman et seront signées à la main, pour contrôle, par un Délégué du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman dûment autorisé. Elles porteront, en outre, le facsimilé de la signature du Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et le facsimilé de la signature du Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad.

Les titres définitifs seront libellés en Français, en Turc, en Allemand, et en Anglais. Ils seront divisés en 5,400 séries de 10,000 fr., 8,160 marks, 400*l.*, 4,800 florins de Hollande, £T. 440 chacune, numérotées de 1 à 5,400. Chaque série sera divisée en coupures qui porteront—

	Fr.
Les Nos. 1 à 20 si ce sont des coupures de	500
Les Nos. 1 à 4 „ „	2,500
Et les Nos. 1 à 2 „ „	5,000

Les titres définitifs seront reçus dans toutes les caisses de l'État Ottoman comme cautionnement ou garantie.

Art. 7. Les coupons échus et payés ainsi que les obligations sorties aux tirages et remboursées, seront annulés par perforation et remis par la Deutsche Bank à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, qui les remettra au Trésor Impérial.

Lors du remboursement des obligations sorties aux tirages tous les coupons non échus devront se trouver attachés au titre, et les coupons manquants seront déduits du montant à rembourser au porteur du titre amorti.

Art. 8. Les coupons échus qui n'auront pas été présentés à l'encaissement dans les cinq années qui suivront la date de leur échéance, ainsi que les obligations sorties aux tirages et non présentées à l'encaissement dans les quinze années qui suivront le jour de leur exigibilité, seront prescrits au profit du Trésor Impérial Ottoman.

Art. 9. Pour assurer le paiement régulier de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement, s'élevant à 2,207,270 fr., 52 c. par an, ainsi que des frais de commission, de change, d'annonces, &c., afférents au présent emprunt, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman assigne et affecte à la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, ès qualités, pour le compte des porteurs des titres de l'emprunt, d'une manière exclusive et irrévocable, jusqu'à parfaite extinction du capital nominal des obligations, sur des revenus dont l'encaissement est confié à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, savoir :—

	£T.
Sur les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia, l'affectation d'une somme fixe minimum de	36,000
Sur les dîmes des Sandjiks d'Urfa et d'Alep, l'affectation d'une somme fixe minimum de	70,000
Soit ensemble	106,000

Ces affectations seront privilégiées à toute charge postérieure. Pour les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia la charge précitée de £T. 36,000 par an ainsi que pour les dîmes des Sandjiaks d'Alep et Urfa la charge de £T. 70,000 par an passeront après des sommes annuelles de £T. 138,000 et de £T. 23,500 respectivement, réservées pour d'autres destinations par des Contrats antérieurs.

Dans le cas où les encaissements sur les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia et des Sandjiaks d'Urfa et d'Alep n'atteindraient pas le montant susindiqué, l'insuffisance en sera comblée par les revenus des dîmes d'autres districts.

Il est stipulé que lors de l'adjudication des dîmes dans le Vilayet de Konia et les Sandjiaks d'Urfa et d'Alep susmentionnés ou dans les districts qui viendraient s'ajouter en cas d'insuffisance, adjudication à laquelle assistera pour chaque vilayet ou sandjiak un délégué de la Dette Publique Ottomane, avec une coopération effective dans toutes les opérations que comporte l'adjudication, les bons obligatoires à livrer par les adjudicataires pour la contre-valeur des dîmes résultant de cette adjudication, pour un montant de £T. 106,000 seront libellés payables à l'ordre des caisses de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, se trouvant dans le Vilayet de Konia et les Sandjiaks d'Urfa et d'Alep susénoncés et payés à celles-ci exclusivement. L'adjudication des dîmes sera opérée en stricte conformité des Règlements en vigueur sur les revenus des dîmes.

En cas d'impossibilité absolue de trouver des affermeurs selon les lois en vigueur, et si les dîmes doivent être réalisées en nature, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman s'engage à placer la totalité de ces produits dans des magasins à double clef, dont l'une confiée aux agents de la Dette Publique Ottomane. Ces produits devront être vendus d'un commun accord par les autorités locales conjointement avec les agents de la Dette Publique Ottomane en conformité des lois en vigueur, et les sommes à payer par les acheteurs devront être versées intégralement et directement dans les caisses de la Dette Publique Ottomane.

Sous aucun prétexte cette dîme ne pourra être soustraite à son affectation.

En dehors des affectations susénoncées, s'élevant à £T. 106,000, le Gouvernement

Impérial Ottoman assigne et affecte au présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable, jusqu'à parfaite extinction du capital nominal des obligations, sa part dans les recettes brutes de la section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia, du Chemin de Fer de Konia-Bagdad-Golfe Persique (voir Article XXXV de la Convention passée le , entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie), qui sera établie annuellement suivant l'Article XL de la Convention précitée. Lorsque le montant de cette part du Gouvernement dans les recettes d'un exercice sera établi, la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad le versera pour le compte du service de l'Emprunt à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et celle-ci remettra en effectif au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman tout surplus qui restera disponible au delà des sommes exigées pour le paiement du coupon échéant le 1er Juillet de l'exercice en cours.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman déclare qu'il n'apportera pendant toute la durée du présent Contrat aucune modification pouvant diminuer ou changer les revenus spécialement affectés au service de l'annuité du présent emprunt, sans accord préalable entre les signataires du présent Contrat et avant d'avoir affecté à l'emprunt d'autres revenus agréés par eux comme d'une valeur égale et présentant les mêmes garanties.

Art. 10. La Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, de son côté, affecté au présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable jusqu'à extinction complète du présent emprunt, la section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia, du Chemin de Fer de Konia-Bagdad-Golfe Persique, ainsi que le matériel roulant y appartenant. Elle affecte, en outre, de la même façon, sa part dans les recettes de ce chemin de fer après paiement des frais d'exploitation ; mais les porteurs de l'emprunt n'auront aucun droit à s'immiscer dans l'administration de la Société.

La dite part des recettes, déduction faite des frais d'exploitation, tels que cette part et ces frais, seront établis par les comptes de la Société, sera versée en cas de besoin par celle-ci à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane pour le compte du service de l'emprunt annuellement après approbation du bilan de chaque exercice par l'assemblée générale. Si l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane n'a pas notifié à la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin du Fer de Bagdad, au plus tard jusqu'au jour précédent, chaque année, l'assemblée générale ordinaire de la dite Société, la nécessité d'appliquer cette affectation au service de l'emprunt, la Société est autorisée à disposer librement de la part des recettes en question. Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman aura à rembourser à la Société les sommes que celle-ci pourrait avoir fournies de ce chef pour compte du service de l'Emprunt d'État.

Art. 11. La Deutsche Bank sera chargée du service de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement du présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable et pour toute sa durée.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman alloue à la Deutsche Bank un ¼ pour cent sur les sommes payées, soit par elle, soit par les maisons de banque qu'elle désignera, pour le service de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement du présent emprunt. Pour le service de l'emprunt à Paris désignation est faite d'ores et déjà de la Banque Impériale Ottomane, la désignation d'autres établissements financiers en dehors de celle-ci étant réservée.

Art. 12. L'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane prélèvera sur le produit des dîmes spécifiées à l'Article 9 du présent Contrat :—

(1.) 5 pour cent alloués à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane pour frais de gestion et de perception des dîmes affectées au présent emprunt ;

(2.) Les sommes nécessaires au service de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement de cet emprunt, y compris les différences de change pouvant résulter des paiements de coupons et de titres amortis opérés à l'étranger en France, en mark, en livres sterling, et en florins de Hollande, et qui seront remis par l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane à la Deutsche Bank sur simple avis de celle-ci ;

(3.) Les frais de publicité (Article 2), de commission (Article 11) ainsi que les menus frais pour envois de coupons, de titres sortis, &c.

Par contre, il est expressément entendu que l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane n'aura aucun droit à une commission sur les sommes qu'elle recevra pour compte du service de l'emprunt par la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad en formation, selon les Articles 9 et 10 du présent Contrat.

Art. 13. L'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane sera tenue de remettre à la Deutsche Bank au fur et à mesure des encaissements effectués sur les dîmes affectées à cet emprunt, les sommes nécessaires au service semestriel de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement de l'emprunt, et ce de façon à ce que la totalité des susdites sommes

se trouve entre les mains de la Deutsche Bank au plus tard quatre semaines avant chaque échéance.

La Deutsche Bank convertira chaque remise en mark dans les trois jours, au mieux des intérêts du Trésor Impérial Ottoman, et passera le montant dans un compte spécial au crédit du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman avec un intérêt de 1 pour cent au-dessous de l'escompte officiel de la Banque de l'Empire d'Allemagne.

Cet intérêt courra au profit du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman à partir de la date de chaque versement fait à la Deutsche Bank jusqu'à deux semaines avant l'échéance semestrielle à laquelle ces versements sont applicables.

Le compte dont il est parlé ci-dessus sera arrêté entre la Deutsche Bank et l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane le 2 Janvier et le 1er Juillet de chaque année.

Art. 14. L'emprunt et tous les actes se rattachant au présent Contrat et à sa réalisation ainsi que les obligations et les coupons de cet emprunt sont exempts de tout droit de timbre, taxe ou impôt en Turquie, dans le présent et dans l'avenir.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman s'interdit de faire aucune déduction ou réduction quelconque sur le paiement des coupons et le remboursement des obligations.

Les frais des timbres à l'étranger sur les obligations du présent emprunt seront à la charge de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad en formation.

Art. 15. L'obtention de la cote des obligations du présent emprunt dans les Bourses Européennes que la Deutsche Bank désignera, et les frais y relatifs, seront à la charge de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad en formation, et le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman interposera ses bons offices, à cet effet, par l'intermédiaire de ses Ambassades.

Le Ministre des Finances signera les prospectus nécessités par l'émission du présent emprunt.

Art. 16. Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman se réserve le droit de retirer de la circulation à toute époque les obligations de l'emprunt qui fait l'objet du présent Contrat, en les remboursant au pair après un préavis public d'au moins deux mois.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman se réserve également le droit de procéder à toute époque et au profit du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman à une conversion du dit emprunt moyennant le remboursement en effectif, au pair, des titres de cet emprunt encore en circulation et leur substitution par d'autres titres portant un intérêt moins élevé.

Art. 17. Tout différend pouvant surgir de l'interprétation ou de l'exécution du présent Contrat, sera réglé par voie d'arbitrage. Chacune des parties intéressées dans le litige nommera un arbitre dans le délai d'un mois.

En cas de désaccord entre les arbitres, ceux-ci nommeront un surarbitre dont la décision devra être définitive et exécutoire pour toutes les parties.

Fait en triple, à Constantinople, le , 1903.

Inclosure 2 in No. 16.

Prospectus.

Emprunt Impérial Ottoman à pour Cent du Chemin de Fer de Badgad, Série Première, d'une valeur nominale de 54,000,000 *fr., soit* 44,064,000 *marks, soit* 2,160,000*l.*, *soit* 25,920,000 *florins de Hollande, soit* £T. 2,376,000.

Cet emprunt a été créé par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman en vertu d'un Iradé de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan du et remis à la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, en paiement de la subvention kilométrique accordée par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman suivant Convention spéciale du pour la première section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia, du Chemin de Fer de Konia–Bagdad–Golfe Persique, dont la Concession est accordée à la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie par Convention du .

Le présent emprunt est émis en obligations au porteur de 500 fr., 408 marks, 20*l.* sterling, 240 florins de Hollande, £T. 22 nominaux chacune et leurs multiples,

et divisé en 5,400 séries de 10,000 fr. chacune, numérotées de 1 à 5,400, chaque série comprenant autant de coupures qu'il faut pour former un capital nominal de 10,000 fr.

Le détail des coupures et leur répartition en séries sera indiqué au pied du présent prospectus.

Les obligations du présent emprunt et leurs coupons sont à tout jamais exempts de tout impôt, de toute taxe, et de tout timbre, ainsi que de toute déduction dans l'Empire Ottoman. Elles seront reçues dans toutes les caisses de l'État Ottoman comme cautionnement ou garantie.

Pour assurer le paiement régulier de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement, s'élevant à 2,207,270 fr. 52 c. par an, ainsi que des frais de commission, de change, d'annonces, &c. afférents au présent emprunt, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman assigne et affecte d'une manière exclusive et irrévocable jusqu'à parfaite extinction du capital nominal des obligations, sur des revenus dont l'encaissement est confié à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, à savoir :—

	£T.
Sur les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia, l'affectation d'une somme fixe minimum de	36,000
Sur les dîmes des Sandjaks d'Alep et d'Urfa, l'affectation d'une somme fixe minimum de	70,000
Soit ensemble	106,000

Les produits moyens annuels des cinq dernières années, déduction faite des frais d'administration et de perception, ont été de :—

£T.		
198,090·80	pour le	Vilayet de Konia.
106,318·46	„	Sandjak d'Alep.
25,709·35	„	„ d'Urfa.
Ensemble .. 330,118·61		

Les susdites affectations d'ensemble £T. 106,000 seront privilégiées à toute charge postérieure. Pour les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia la charge précitée de £T. 36,000 par an, ainsi que pour les dîmes des Sandjaks d'Alep et d'Urfa la charge de £T. 70,000 par an, passeront après des sommes annuelles de £T. 138,000, et de £T. 23,500 respectivement, réservées pour d'autres destinations par des contrats antérieurs.

Dans le cas où les encaissements sur les dîmes du Vilayet de Konia et des Sandjaks d'Urfa et d'Alep n'atteindraient pas le montant susindiqué de £T. 106,000 par an affecté au présent emprunt, l'insuffisance en sera comblée par les revenus des dîmes d'autres districts.

Il est stipulé que lors de l'adjudication des dîmes dans le Vilayet de Konia et les Sandjaks d'Urfa et d'Alep susmentionnés ou dans les districts qui viendraient s'ajouter en cas d'insuffisance, adjudication à laquelle assistera pour chaque vilayet ou sandjak un délégué de la Dette Publique Ottomane, avec une coopération effective dans toutes les opérations que comporte l'adjudication, les bons obligatoires à livrer par les adjudicataires pour la contre-valeur des dîmes résultant de cette adjudication pour un montant de £T. 106,000, seront libellés payables à l'ordre des caisses de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, se trouvant dans le vilayet et les sandjaks susénoncés et payés à celle-ci exclusivement. L'adjudication des dîmes sera opérée en stricte conformité des Règlements en vigueur sur les revenus des dîmes. En cas d'impossibilité absolue de trouver des affermeurs selon les lois en vigueur, et si les dîmes doivent être réalisées en nature, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman s'engage à placer la totalité de ces produits dans des magasins à double clef, dont l'une confiée aux agents de la Dette Publique Ottomane. Ces produits devront être vendus d'un commun accord par les autorités locales conjointement avec les agents de la Dette Publique Ottomane, en conformité des lois en vigueur, et les sommes à payer par les acheteurs devront être versées intégralement et directement dans les caisses de la Dette Publique Ottomane. Sous aucun prétexte cette dîme ne pourra être soustraite à son affectation.

En dehors des affectations susénoncées, s'élevant à £T. 106,000, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman assigne et affecte au présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable, jusqu'à parfaite extinction du capital nominal des obligations, sa part dans les recettes brutes du Chemin de Fer de Konia–Eregli, qui sera établie annuellement.* Lorsque

* A cet égard les Articles XXXV et XL de la Convention concessionnaire stipulent ce qui suit :—

"Article XXXV. . . . . Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman affecte encore d'une façon irrévocable aux porteurs des titres d'Emprunt précités, la part lui revenant dans les recettes brutes de la dite ligne. (Konia–Bagdad–Golfe Persique.)

le montant de cette part du Gouvernement dans les recettes d'un exercice sera ainsi établi, la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, le versera pour compte du service de l'emprunt à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et celle-ci remettra en effectif au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman tout surplus qui restera disponible au delà de la somme exigée éventuellement pour parfaire le service annuel de l'emprunt.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman déclare qu'il n'apportera pendant toute la durée du présent Contrat aucune modification pouvant diminuer ou changer les revenus spécialement affectés au service de l'annuité du présent emprunt, sans accord préalable avec la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et la Deutsche Bank, et avant d'avoir affecté à l'emprunt d'autres revenus agréés par eux comme d'une valeur égale et présentant les mêmes garanties.

La Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, de son côté, affecte au présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable jusqu'à son extinction complète, la section de 200 kilom. partant de Konia, du Chemin de Fer de Konia–Bagdad–Golfe Persique, ainsi que le matériel roulant y appartenant. Elle affecte, en outre, de la même façon, sa part dans les recettes de ce chemin de fer après paiement des frais d'exploitation; mais les porteurs de l'emprunt n'auront aucun droit à s'immiscer dans l'Administration de la Société.

La dite part des recettes, déduction faite des frais d'exploitation, tels que cette part et ces frais seront établis par les comptes de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, sera versée en cas de besoin par celle-ci à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane pour le compte du service de l'emprunt annuellement après approbation du bilan de chaque exercice par l'assemblée générale. Si l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane n'a pas notifié à la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, au plus tard jusqu'au jour précédent, chaque année, l'assemblée générale ordinaire de la dite Société, la nécessité d'appliquer cette affectation au service de l'emprunt, la Société est autorisée à disposer librement de la part des recettes en question.

Les obligations de cet emprunt seront libellées en langues Française, Turque, Allemande, et Anglaise. Elles porteront la griffe du Ministre des Finances de l'Empire Ottoman et seront signées à la main, pour contrôle, par un délégué du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman dûment autorisé; elles porteront, en outre, le fac-similé de la signature du Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane et le fac-similé de la signature du Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad.

La Deutsche Bank est autorisée à émettre des titres provisoires (scrips) qui seront échangés sans frais contre les obligations définitives.

La Deutsche Bank est chargée du service de l'intérêt et de l'amortissement du présent emprunt d'une manière irrévocable et pour toute sa durée, et est autorisée à désigner d'autres guichets de paiement soit en Allemagne, soit dans d'autres pays. Ces guichets seront aussi obligés à délivrer sans frais des nouvelles feuilles de coupons.

Le paiement des coupons et des titres appelés au remboursement aura lieu au choix des porteurs à Constantinople, Paris, Berlin, Francfort-sur-le-Mein, Londres, Amsterdam, et dans d'autres villes de l'Europe, dans la monnaie du lieu du paiement aux changes fixes de C.F. 22, 500 fr., 406 marks, 20*l.*, 240 florins de Hollande.

"Si la recette kilométrique brute de la ligne dépasse 4500 fr., mais sans dépasser 10,000 fr., l'excédent au delà de 4,500 fr. reviendra entièrement au Gouvernement.

"Si la recette kilométrique brute dépasse 10,000 fr., la partie jusqu'à 10,000 fr. devant toujours être partagée comme il est dit plus haut, les 50 pour cent de l'excédent au delà de ces 10,000 fr. reviendront au Gouvernement Impérial et les 50 pour cent à la Société.

". . . . . Pour les divers emprunts à émettre pour l'exécution des différentes sections du chemin de fer, masse commune sera faite des recettes revenant au Gouvernement de façon à ce que le montant disponible reste affecté à la communauté des titres de ces mêmes emprunts, dans la proportion du montant primitif nominal de chaque emprunt.

"Aussitôt après le paiement des coupons et de l'amortissement des titres d'État émis, le surplus des recettes appartenant au Gouvernement Ottoman, sera versé à celui-ci chaque année, après accomplissement des formalités prévues à l'Article LX de la présente Convention."

"Article LX. Le concessionnaire remettra au Ministère des Travaux Publics, dans le courant du mois de Janvier de chaque année, les comptes des recettes préalablement vérifiés et approuvés par le Commissaire Impérial, et la [illegible] Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et à la Société, sont déterminées en conformité de l'Article XXXV de la présente Convention.

"Aussitôt que le montant de la part du Gouvernement dans ces recettes sera établi, la Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad en fera le versement pour le compte du service de l'emprunt ou des emprunts d'État, à l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et celle-ci remettra en effectif au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, tout surplus qui restera disponible au delà des sommes exigées pour le paiement du coupon échéant le 1er Juillet de l'exercice en cours. . . . . ."

Les intérêts seront payables tous les six mois, la première fois à l'échéance du 1er Juillet, 1903 (N. S.), et ainsi de suite les 2 Janvier (N. S.), et 1er Juillet (N. S.) de chaque année jusqu'au remboursement complet du présent emprunt.

L'amortissement se fera en une période d'au plus de quatre-vingt-dix-huit ans, comptés à partir du 2 Janvier, 1903 (N. S.), au moyen d'un amortissement de 0·087538 pour cent l'an, calculé sur le montant primitif de l'emprunt, et devant s'effectuer par voie de rachat au-dessous du pair par les soins de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, et par tirages au sort annuels au pair, si des rachats ne peuvent pas s'effectuer au-dessous du pair.

Les tirages auront lieu deux mois avant l'échéance du coupon au 2 Janvier (N. S.) et le paiement des titres amortis sera effectué simultanément avec le paiement de ce coupon. Les tirages auront lieu par les soins et aux bureaux de l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane à Constantinople, la première fois le 2 Novembre, 1903 (N. S.). Le résultat de chaque tirage, comme toutes les annonces concernant le service du présent emprunt, seront publiés dans deux journaux de Constantinople, deux journaux de Berlin, un journal de Francfort-sur-le-Mein, deux journaux de Paris, et un journal de Londres.

Lors du remboursement des obligations sorties aux tirages, tous les coupons non-échus à la date fixée pour le remboursement devront se trouver attachés aux titres, et les coupons manquants seront déduits du montant à rembourser au porteur du titre amorti.

Les coupons échus qui n'auront pas été présentés à l'encaissement dans les cinq années qui suivront la date de leur échéance, ainsi que les obligations sorties aux tirages et non présentées à l'encaissement dans les quinze années qui suivront le jour de leur exigibilité, seront prescrits au profit du Trésor Impérial Ottoman.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman se réserve le droit de retirer de la circulation à toute époque les obligations du présent emprunt en les remboursant au pair après un préavis public d'au moins deux mois.

No. 17.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 124.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 10, 1903.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 120 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of the Statutes of the Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad ("en formation"), which were signed by the Minister of Finance and the representatives of the Anatolian Railway on the 5th instant.

The total share capital of the Company is fixed, for the present, at 600,000*l.*, of which 10 per cent. is to be held inalienably by the Anatolian Railway Company, and a further 10 per cent. may be acquired by the Ottoman Government.

On the other hand, the Administrative Council of the new Company (Board of Directors) is to consist of eleven members, of whom at least three will be nominated by the Anatolian Railway and three must be Ottoman subjects. The Germans and the Turks together will, therefore, have a permanent majority of votes on the Board.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 17.

Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad.

Statuts.

LA soussignée Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie à Constantinople:

En vue de réaliser la Concession accordée à la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie susnommée, par Convention en date du 5 Mars (20 Février), 1903 (1318), pour la construction et l'exploitation de la ligne de Konia à Bassorah et embranchements, ainsi que toutes les dépendances du dit chemin de fer accordées

par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et des engagements qu'elle comporte, forme une Société Anonyme Ottomane qui sera soumise aux clauses et conditions suivantes:—

TITRE I.—*Formation et Objet de la Société, Dénomination, Siège.*

Article 1er. Il est formé entre la soussignée et tous les propriétaires des actions ci-après créées, une Société Anonyme Ottomane ayant pour objet de construire, administrer, et exploiter les lignes du chemin de fer indiquées dans la Convention et Cahier des Charges échangés en date du 5 Mars (20 Février), 1903 (1318), entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, conformément aux stipulations de la dite Convention et Cahier des Charges. La Société pourra aussi s'intéresser par achat de titres à des Sociétés nouvelles ou déjà existantes de construction et d'exploitation de chemins de fer dans l'Empire Ottoman.

Art. 2. La Société prend la dénomination de "Société Impériale Ottomane du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad," et sera soumise aux Lois et Règlements de l'Empire en qualité de Société Ottomane.

Art. 3. La Société a son siège à Constantinople et pourra établir des succursales dans toute autre ville de l'Empire Ottoman ou à l'étranger.

Art. 4. La durée de la Société est fixée à quatre-vingt-dix-neuf années, sauf le cas de dissolution anticipée ou de prorogation. Cette durée sera prolongée conformément à l'Article II de la Convention en date du 5 Mars (20 Février), 1903 (1318).

TITRE II.—*Apport et Transfert de la Concession à la Société.*

Art. 5. La Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie apporte à la nouvelle Société la Concession qui lui a été octroyée par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, avec tous les droits, privilèges, et avantages y attachés ou en dérivant, et la nouvelle Société devient titulaire et propriétaire de la dite Concession, et se trouve substituée à tous les droits et obligations du concessionnaire. Toutefois la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie garde pour son propre compte exclusif les droits et obligations qui ne regardent que les anciennes lignes et notamment ceux de ces droits et obligations qui découlent des Articles II, XXXIII, et XXXVII de la Convention du 5 Mars (20 Février), 1903 (1318). Remise sera faite par la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie à la nouvelle Société des Firmans, Conventions, actes, et documents quelconques concernant la Concession.

Art. 6. Le fonds social se compose du capital-actions et des obligations qui seront émises ultérieurement selon les besoins résultant de l'application des clauses et conditions des actes de Concession. Le capital-actions initial de la Société est de 15,000,000 fr., soit 12,240,000 marks, soit 600,000*l*., divisé en 30,000 actions au montant nominal de 500 fr., soit 408 marks, soit 20*l*. chacune. Le capital-actions pourra être augmenté de 50 pour cent par l'assemblée générale.

La Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie souscrira 10 pour cent du capital-actions; ces actions seront inaliénables et la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie ne pourra pas s'en dessaisir sans le consentement du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman aura aussi le droit de souscrire jusqu'à concurrence de 10 pour cent du capital-actions.

Art. 7. La Société ne sera définitivement constituée qu'après la souscription de la totalité du capital et le versement du premier dixième de ce capital.

Des certificats provisoires constatant les versements seront remis aux souscripteurs pour être échangés contre des titres définitifs après le versement de la moitié du capital. Toutefois, les actions souscrites par la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie resteront inscrites au nom de cette Société.

Les actions seront libellées d'une part en Turc et de l'autre en Allemand, en Français, et en Anglais.

Les 90 pour cent restants seront appelés au fur et à mesure des besoins de la Société, conformément aux décisions du Conseil d'Administration et après avis inséré, trente jours d'avance au moins, dans plusieurs journaux officiels ou non, se publiant à Constantinople ou dans d'autres pays.

Art. 8. Les titres sont nominatifs jusqu'au paiement de la moitié du montant des actions; leur négociation ne peut avoir lieu avant le versement du premier dixième.

La négociation s'opère par un transfert sur les registres de la Société, signé par le concessionnaire et le cédant et l'un des Administrateurs; mention de ce transfert est faite sur le titre.

Après leur libération de moitié les actions seront au porteur.

Art. 9. Toute action est indivisible à l'égard de la Société, qui n'en reconnaît aucun fractionnement.

Les héritiers ou ayants cause d'un actionnaire ne peuvent pour quelque motif que ce soit provoquer l'apposition des scellés sur les biens et valeurs de la Société, ni s'immiscer en aucune manière dans son administration; ils doivent, pour l'exercice de leurs droits, s'en rapporter aux inventaires sociaux et aux délibérations de l'assemblée générale.

Art. 10. Tout versement en retard porte intérêt de plein droit en faveur de la Société à raison de 6 pour cent par an, à compter du jour de l'exigibilité et sans aucune mise en demeure.

Art. 11. A défaut de paiement des versements à leurs échéances, la Société poursuit les débiteurs et peut faire vendre les actions en retard.

A cet effet, les numéros de ces actions sont publiés comme défaillants par la voie des journaux, et quinze jours après cette publication il est procédé à la vente des actions pour le compte et aux risques et périls du retardataire, sans aucune mise en demeure ni formalité judiciaire; cette vente a lieu dans les Bourses de Constantinople et de Berlin, et dans d'autres Bourses si les actions sont cotées, et dans le cas contraire aux enchères publiques.

Les titres ainsi vendus deviennent nuls de plein droit; il en est délivré aux acquéreurs de nouveaux sous les mêmes numéros.

Le prix de la vente s'impute dans les termes de droit sur ce qui est dû à la Société par l'actionnaire exproprié, qui reste passible de la différence ou profit de l'excédent.

TITRE III.—*Administration de la Société.*

Art. 12. La Société est administrée par un Conseil d'Administration composé d'au moins onze membres. Au moins trois membres du Conseil d'Administration seront nommés par la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, qui exercera ce droit par son Conseil d'Administration. Les autres Administrateurs seront nommés par l'assemblée générale. Trois membres du Conseil d'Administration seront sujets Ottomans.

Le Conseil d'Administration se réunit à Constantinople.

Art. 13. La durée des fonctions des membres du Conseil d'Administration est de trois ans; la première année sera calculée à partir de la constitution de la Société jusqu'à la clôture de l'assemblée générale ordinaire subséquente à l'expiration de l'exercice correspondant. Le Conseil se renouvelle chaque année par la sortie d'un tiers de ses membres. Les membres sortants sont désignés par le sort pour les deux premières années et ensuite par voie d'ancienneté. Dans le cas où parmi les membres sortants il se trouverait des personnes nommées par la Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie, celle-ci aura à nommer leurs remplaçants.

Les membres sortants peuvent toujours être réélus.

Art. 14. Le Conseil d'Administration se réunit aussi souvent que l'intérêt de la Société l'exige et au moins une fois par mois. La présence de plus de la moitié des membres au moins est nécessaire pour la validité des délibérations.

Les délibérations sont prises à la majorité des voix des membres présents. En cas de partage la proposition est renvoyée au Conseil suivant et alors en cas de nouveau partage elle est rejetée.

Art. 15. Les délibérations sont constatées par des procès-verbaux transcrits sur un registre spécial, et signé par les Administrateurs qui y ont pris part. Les copies ou extraits de ces délibérations pour faire foi, doivent être signés par le Président du Conseil ou celui qui le remplace.

Art. 16. Chaque Administrateur doit être propriétaire de dix actions inaliénables pendant la durée de ses fonctions; elles seront frappées d'un timbre indiquant l'inaliénabilité et déposées dans la caisse sociale.

Art. 17. En cas de vacance par décès, démission, ou autre cause le Conseil pourvoit provisoirement au remplacement jusqu'à la prochaine assemblée générale qui précède à l'élection définitive.

Art. 18. Chaque année le Conseil nomme parmi ses membres un Président et un ou plusieurs Vice-Présidents.

En cas d'absence du Président et des Vice-Présidents le Conseil désigne celui de ses membres qui doit remplir les fonctions de Président.

Art. 19. Les Administrateurs qui résident à l'étranger et ceux qui seront accidentellement absents peuvent se faire représenter dans les délibérations par un de leurs collègues, sans que celuici puisse réunir plus de trois votes y compris le sien.

Art. 20. Le Conseil a les pouvoirs les plus étendus pour l'administration des biens et affaires de la Société; il peut même transiger et compromettre, il arrête les comptes qui doivent être soumis à l'assemblée générale et propose les répartitions de dividendes.

Le Président du Conseil d'Administration représente soit personnellement, soit par un mandataire, la Société en justice tant en demandant qu'en défendant.

Art. 21. Le Conseil peut déléguer tout ou partie de ses pouvoirs à un ou plusieurs de ses membres par un mandat spécial pour les objets déterminés ou pour un temps déterminé.

Il peut aussi les déléguer pour l'expédition des affaires courantes à une ou plusieurs personnes prises en dehors de son sein.

Art. 22. Les Administrateurs reçoivent des jetons de présence dont la valeur est fixée par l'assemblée générale indépendamment de la quote-part qui leur est allouée dans les bénéfices nets.

Titre IV.—*Assemblée Générale.*

Art. 23. L'assemblée générale régulièrement constituée représente l'universalité des actionnaires.

Art. 24. Il est tenu une assemblée générale ordinaire chaque année dans le courant des six premiers mois. Le lieu de la réunion est fixé par le Conseil d'Administration.

En outre, l'assemblée peut être convoquée extraordinairement en cas de besoin par le Conseil d'Administration.

Art. 25. L'assemblée générale se compose des actionnaires qui possèdent, soit à titre de propriétaire, soit à titre de mandataire, trente actions au moins.

Tout membre de l'assemblée générale a droit à autant de votes qu'il possède comme propriétaire ou mandataire de fois trente actions, mais sans qu'il puisse jamais réunir plus de 100 voix.

Art. 26. Les convocations doivent être faites par un avis annoncé par la voie de la presse, un mois avant l'époque de la réunion, ainsi qu'il est indiqué à l'Article 7.

Art. 27. L'assemblée est régulièrement constituée lorsque les membres présents ou représentés réunissent le quart du fonds social.

Pour vérifier si le quart du fonds social est représenté, tous les actionnaires ayant droit de prendre part à l'assemblée sont invités par les avis de convocation à déposer leurs titres dans les dix jours aux lieux indiqués par le Conseil.

Si à la première réunion le nombre d'actions représentées n'est pas suffisant, une nouvelle assemblée est convoquée et elle délibère valablement quelle que soit la portion du capital représentée par les actionnaires présents, mais seulement sur l'ordre du jour de la première convocation.

Cette nouvelle réunion doit avoir lieu à quinze jours au moins et un mois au plus d'intervalle, et les convocations peuvent n'être faites que vingt jours à l'avance.

Art. 28. L'assemblée générale est présidée par le Président du Conseil ou à son défaut par un Administrateur désigné par le Conseil.

Deux des plus forts actionnaires présents remplissent les fonctions de scrutateurs.

Le bureau désigne le Secrétaire.

Art. 29. Les délibérations sont prises à la majorité des voix.

L'ordre du jour est arrêté par le Conseil.

Il n'y est porté que les propositions émanant du Conseil et celles qui lui auront été communiquées vingt jours au moins avant la réunion avec la signature d'actionnaire représentant au moins 10 pour cent du capital.

Il ne peut être mis en délibération que les objets portés à l'ordre du jour.

Art. 30. L'assemblée générale désignera, soit parmi les actionnaires, soit parmi les personnes étrangères à la Société un ou plusieurs commissaires chargés de la vérification des comptes.

Art. 31. L'assemblée générale annuelle entend le Rapport que le Conseil doit lui présenter chaque année sur la situation des affaires de la Société et celui des commissaires sur les comptes.

Elle discute, approuve, ou rejette les comptes.

Elle fixe le dividende.

Elle nomme les Administrateurs à remplacer.

Elle délibère et statue souverainement sur tous les intérêts de la Société et confère au Conseil d'Administration tous les pouvoirs supplémentaires qui seraient reconnus utiles.

L'assemblée ne peut décider l'augmentation du capital qu'avec une majorité réunissant les deux tiers au moins des actionnaires présents ou représentés.

Art. 32. Les délibérations de l'assemblée générale sont constatées par des procès-verbaux inscrits sur un registre spécial et signé par les membres du bureau.

Une feuille de présence contenant les noms et domiciles des actionnaires membres de l'assemblée et le nombre d'actions dont chacun est porteur est signée par les membres présents et annexée au procès-verbal pour être communiquée à tout ayant droit.

Art. 33. Les copies ou extraits des délibérations pour faire foi doivent être signés par le Président du Conseil ou celui qui le remplace.

Art. 34. Les décisions de l'assemblée générale prises en conformité des présents Statuts sont obligatoires même pour les actionnaires absents ou dissidents.

Titre V.—*Inventaires et Comptes Annuels.*

Art. 35. L'année sociale commence le 1er Janvier et finit le 31 Décembre.

Par exception le premier exercice comprendra le temps écoulé entre la constitution définitive de la Société et le 31 Décembre suivant.

A la fin de chaque année sociale il est dressé par les soins du Conseil un inventaire général de l'actif et du passif.

Cet inventaire ainsi que le bilan et les comptes sont mis à la disposition des commissaires quarante jours avant l'assemblée générale annuelle. Ils sont ensuite présentés à l'assemblée.

Tout actionnaire ayant droit de prendre part à l'assemblée peut en prendre communication.

Titre VI.—*Partage des Bénéfices et Amortissement.*

Art. 36. Sur les bénéfices nets disponibles de chaque exercice ainsi qu'ils résulteront des bilans établis par le Conseil d'Administration on prélèvera:—

(1.) 10 pour cent pour le fonds de réserve, jusqu'à ce que celui-ci ait atteint le quart du capital nominal de la Société;

(2.) Le surplus sera employé pour payer aux actionnaires un premier dividende, jusqu'à concurrence de 5 pour cent d'intérêts sur le montant versé des actions;

(3.) De l'excédent éventuel les Administrateurs recevront 10 pour cent à titre de tantième, et les actionnaires auront droit au solde de 90 pour cent qui sera réparti à titre de dividende à moins que l'assemblée générale, sur la proposition du Conseil d'Administration, ne décide l'emploi d'une part de la somme disponible à la création de réserves extraordinaires.

Art. 37. L'assemblée générale pourra prélever chaque année un tant pour cent sur les bénéfices nets pour amortir un nombre déterminé d'actions à échoir par voie de tirage au sort. Les actions amorties continueront à jouir du dividende, mais n'auront pas droit à l'intérêt.

Titre VII.—*Fonds de Réserve.*

Art. 38. Le fonds de réserve se compose de l'accumulation des sommes prélevées sur les bénéfices annuels en conformité de l'Article 36.

Il est destiné à faire face aux dépenses extraordinaires ou imprévues.

Art. 39. En cas d'insuffisance des produits d'une année pour donner un intérêt ou dividende de 5 pour cent par action, la différence peut être prélevée sur le fonds de réserve.

Art. 40. A l'expiration de la Société et après la liquidation de ses engagements le fonds de réserve sera partagé entre toutes les actions.

TITRE VIII.—*Prorogation, Dissolution, Liquidation.*

Art. 41. Le Conseil d'Administration peut, à toute époque et pour quelque cause que ce soit, proposer à l'assemblée générale, convoquée à cet effet, la prorogation, la dissolution, et la liquidation de la Société, ainsi que tout projet de fusion avec d'autres Sociétés. Toutefois la prorogation ou la fusion s'il y a lieu ne pourra se faire qu'avec l'autorisation du Gouvernement Impérial.

Art. 42. En cas de perte des trois quarts du fonds social, les Administrateurs convoquent l'assemblée générale à l'effet de statuer sur la question de savoir s'il y a lieu de prononcer la dissolution de la Société ou de continuer des opérations.

Art. 43. A l'expiration de la Société ou en cas de dissolution anticipée, l'assemblée générale convoquée règle le mode de liquidation et nomme un ou plusieurs liquidateurs.

Pendant la liquidation les pouvoirs de l'assemblée générale continuent comme pendant l'existence de la Société.

Les liquidateurs peuvent, en vertu d'une délibération de cette assemblée et avec l'autorisation du Gouvernement Impérial, faire le transfert à toute Société ou à tout particulier des droits, actions, et obligations de la Société dissoute.

Art. 44. Les assemblées générales extraordinaires appelées à statuer sur les objets indiqués au présent titre ne seront valablement constituées que si elles réunissent un nombre d'actions représentant la moitié au moins du capital social.

Les présents Statuts ont été dressés en conformité de l'Iradé Impérial transmis par Tezkéré Grand Viziriel en date du 5 Zilhidjé, 1320, et 19 Février, 1318.

Constantinople, le 20 Février, 1318 (5 *Mars*, 1903).

Certifié conforme à l'original.

Le Directeur du Bureau de Traduction du Ministère
du Commerce et des Travaux Publics :
(L.S.) (Signé) MOURIR.

(L.S.) (Signé) ZIHNI.
ARTHUR GWINNER.
KURT ZANDER.
HUGUENIN.

No. 18.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 125. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 8, 1903.*

I THINK it may be worth while to report to your Lordship, in connection with the subject of the Bagdad Railway, a conversation which I had a few days ago with M. Testa, now the German Delegate on the Council of the Ottoman Foreign Debt, but who has been for upwards of twenty years the confidential and highly esteemed first Dragoman of the Embassy.

In reply to some tentative remarks as to the possibly critical position of the Bagdad Railway in the event of Russian advance or aggression upon Turkey, M. Testa said that the German Government had never entertained any anxiety upon this score, nor did he think there was reason to do so. In his opinion Germany would never take up the cudgels or quarrel with Russia on account of Turkey. Their interest in keeping on good terms with their Eastern neighbour far outweighed any possible advantage to be gained by taking Turkey's side. If at any time hostilities unfortunately broke out between the two countries, their policy would be to give Turkey the best advice they could and to assist her in every legitimate way consonant with neutrality, but they would not run the risk of complications with Russia to save her from defeat, however crushing. They would remain passive spectators. If Turkey were successful, they would be quickly reinstated in their present favourable position, and if she were unsuccessful, he felt confident the first thing Russia would do would be to promise to respect their interests in regard to the Bagdad Railway, the Haidar Pasha Port, &c. Supposing even that the war resulted in Russian acquisition of

territory traversed by the railway, it was possible, no doubt, that she might object to leave the line in foreign hands, but in this case she would be forced to buy it almost at a fancy price. Germany had, in this respect, created a valuable precedent in Alsace-Lorraine, where they had bought up the French railways at the full market value, and probably the same course would be followed in regard to the Bagdad line. The last thing Russia would desire would be to risk fresh complications by disregarding the vested commercial interests of other countries, and the more so if the railway became, as he thought was now not improbable, an international concern.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 19.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 29.)

(No. 145.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 23, 1903.*

I SPOKE to the Grand Vizier this afternoon about the state of poverty said to exist in certain districts of Armenia and of the heavy arrears of taxes, amounting in some cases to eighteen years, which were demanded by the authorities from a poverty-stricken population. I urged the impolicy of demands which made life insupportable to the people and took away all hope of any improvement in their situation, and I pressed his Highness to use his great influence towards relieving these people from oppression and lightening their fiscal burthens. If the arrears were reduced to a sum within the power of the people to pay—say, to three years—they would see in it a signal mark of Imperial clemency and be encouraged to pay off the debt. Thus the Government Treasury would be satisfied, while the prospect of resuming a solvent and prosperous condition would put new heart into the people.

His Highness replied that the amount of arrears demanded was greatly exaggerated. Moreover, he had already adopted certain measures for the relief and improvement of the condition of many districts which he felt confident would have a very beneficial effect. He took note, however, of the remarks I had made on the subject, and said that he would be grateful for any further information I could give him at further times. He had succeeded in appointing an excellent Vali to Diarbekir, and if he saw his way to do so, he would propose a stronger and more energetic Vali for Bitlis. With the Governor-General of Erzeroum he had no reason to find fault.

I told his Highness that I was relieved to find the matter holding his attention, as I considered that a discontented population close to the frontier was a danger to the Empire; and the reports I had received lead me to fear lest the anticipated disturbances in Macedonia should find an echo in Kurdistan. His Highness replied that he was aware of a certain fermentation in that district and of the presence of bands who had come over the frontier to incite the inhabitants to sedition. He had, however, come to an agreement with the Persian Government by which measures were to be taken to prevent such occurrences; and arrangements had been made for the echelonning of Turkish troops along the frontier by which the incursions of these bands would, he hoped, be frustrated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 20.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 92.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, April 2, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 145 of the 23rd ultimo, reporting that you had made representations to the Grand Vizier in regard to the heavy demands which are said to be made by the Turkish authorities on the Armenians in certain parts of Asia Minor for arrears of taxes due to the Imperial Government.

Your Excellency's action in the matter is approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 21.

Question asked in the House of Commons, April 7, 1903.

Mr. Gibson Bowles,—To ask the First Lord of the Treasury what communications have passed between His Majesty's Government and foreign Governments relating to the German Anatolian or Bagdad Railway, or to its extension to Koweit on the Persian Gulf; with what Governments have such communications passed, and what is their effect, and has been their result; have His Majesty's Government been approached with any proposal for giving encouragement to the building of that railway either by guaranteeing to it a postal subsidy or in any other manner; if so, what policy do they propose to pursue in the matter; and will he lay on the Table any correspondence that has taken place.

Answer.

There have been no formal communications between His Majesty's Government and any foreign Government on the subject of the Bagdad Railway.

The proposed railway is not, as suggested in the question, to be a German railway.

The subject was referred to in two brief conversations, one with the French and one with the German Ambassador, about thirteen months ago. Lord Lansdowne then stated that we should not regard the undertaking with unfriendly eyes provided that British capital and British interests were placed at least on terms of equality with those of any other Power.

I am not aware that these conversations have (in the language of the question) had any "results," or have exercised any influence on subsequent events.

Communications have been and are still going on with British capitalists on the subject. No final arrangements have been arrived at. The proposals under consideration involve no guarantee of a postal or any other subsidy. The suggestions to be made to us are, we understand (1) that British capital and British control are to be on an absolute equality with the capital and control of any other Power; (2) that, in respect to the negotiations which are now going on with the Turkish Government for a new Commercial Treaty (and which, quite apart from the Bagdad Railway, raise the question of increasing the Turkish customs), His Majesty's Government should not object to a reasonable increase in these duties, although a part of the increase is to be used in guaranteeing a railway so important for the commercial interests of Turkey; (3) that, if the railway should prove to be a substantially better route for conveying the mails to India, it may be used for conveying those mails, on terms to be agreed upon hereafter; (4) that His Majesty's Government should assist, not by money or the promise of money, but by their good offices in providing a proper terminus at or near Koweit.

These suggestions will be carefully considered.

No. 22.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

(No. 86.)
(Extract.)

Foreign Office, April 14, 1903.

I TOOK the opportunity of asking the Russian Ambassador to-day whether he had noticed the attention which our newspapers had lately been paying to the Bagdad Railway question. I explained that I was not in a position to discuss that question officially, and, as he had no doubt observed, we were as yet uncommitted. It would, however, be most interesting to me to know how he regarded the matter. My own personal feeling, I said, had always been in favour of giving an international character to these great enterprises.

His Excellency said that the Russian Government had never liked the scheme, which they regarded as intended to give Germany a dangerous preponderance in Asia Minor.

I replied that I understood this feeling if the railway was indeed to be a German railway. My information was, however, to the effect that the scheme had undergone considerable modifications and that the British financiers who were interesting themselves in the matter were to be approached on quite a different basis. France, Germany, and Great Britain were, I believed, to be offered an absolutely equal participation; and each of the three groups was to have the same number of directors. Out of a total of thirty, eight would be assigned to Great Britain, and the same number to France and Germany, the remaining six being given to the other parties interested. This arrangement would obviously put it out of the power of any one group to dominate the rest. His Excellency seemed impressed by my statement, and asked me whether I had any objection to his repeating it to the Russian Government. I said that he might do so, but I begged him to make it clear that any opinions which I had expressed were my own only, and given to him without prejudice. I did not, moreover, pretend to any knowledge of company promotion, and I felt that I was at a disadvantage in endeavouring to explain the situation to him.

No. 23.

Mr. Hills to Mr. Balfour.—(Received at Foreign Office, April 17.)

Dear Mr. Balfour, *Orchard Yard, Blackwall, London. April 9, 1903.*

I HAVE recently returned from the Cape having, as I hope you will be interested to hear, won my principal action against the Cape Government, after eight days hard fighting in their Supreme Court.

I have often blamed myself for troubling you with my own private affairs, but none the less, the recollection of your great personal kindness and courtesy will remain one of the pleasantest memories of a time of grave doubt and difficulty.

The matter I now address you upon is, however, not one of private but of public importance.

I am, as you are, I think, aware, the holder of a Concession from the Turkish Government for the construction of a railway from Haifa, on the Mediterranean, to Damascus, with preferential powers to construct further railways south and east of Damascus within the Turkish dominion, *i.e.*, from Damascus to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

Quite recently, under the auspices of the Foreign Office, an arrangement has been come to with the Turkish Government for the repurchase of this Concession and the partially constructed railway. A moiety of the purchase-money has been paid, and the balance falls due in August next. I have always thought that this Concession with its rights to construct railways through the Turkish Empire, with its harbours on the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, might, in British hands, and backed by British capital, prove an asset of paramount political importance in the near future.

I have recently received from my engineer at Haifa important advices as to the sinister political aims now being discussed in view of the forthcoming cession of our concessional rights and railway.

He writes: "The so-called Hejjaz line is to be a strategical line to run only as far as Akabeh, on the Red Sea, to prevent further English progress in Arabia, it is not laid out to Mecca at all on their plans, but takes from Maan a south-westerly direction straight for Akabeh. I collected these important facts on the spot; they are absolutely reliable, and I wish you could give your Government a hint on the subject. I saw the plans myself.

"I am also able to inform you that the Belgian Consul-General from Smyrna arrived here on the 23rd instant and left on the 26th, and as much as I gathered from his conversation the Haifa-Mjerib line is to be carried out by a German-Belgian Company They feel vexed by Article 7 of your Agreement with the Turkish Government, but they 'hope' to be able to overcome or 'go round' it by not declaring officially that they are the parties interested. This view is generally shared by all who watch the proceedings. I presume the reports of the British Consul of Haifa to his Department will coincide with my remarks. A Belgian Vice-Consulate has been established at Haifa."

I have done my best to keep the British flag flying in the Near East, but I am now powerless to control events. Under these circumstances, I think it is right to

inform you of what is reported to be transpiring. If in any way the rights of the Syria Ottoman Railway are available for the assertion of British interests, I need scarcely say that I shall hold myself wholly at your disposal for this purpose.

Believe me to remain, yours truly,

(Signed) W. HILLS.

No. 24.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 21.)

(No. 183.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 14, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the action of Sheikh Muhammad Sadik in the Mosul Vilayet.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 24.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.)

Sir, *Van, March 21, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to thank you for the copy of despatch No. 25–4 dated the 9th January last, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, inclosing news-letter No. 39 of the 24th December, 1902, from the Consular Agent at Mosul. The latter referred to an attack made by the notorious Sheikh Muhammad Sadik of Shemdinian upon Sheikh Barzan of Zibar, and his intention to take the district over himself.

In the present state of the Government in the Mosul Vilayet there is nothing improbable in this. I heard of it while I was still in Mosul, and though it excited some comment, the general opinion seemed to be that Government would take no action against the Sheikh.

Despatches from myself and predecessors have pointed out this man's growing power, and the reluctance of the Government to deal with him.

Just now there are very persistent rumours that he is preparing to make a raid into Persia in the spring, as did his father, Sheikh Obeidulla, in 1881. Also that he is intriguing with the Russians. Also that he is building forts—nominally houses—in Gevver, and that he has openly threatened to turn the Turks out of Gevver this summer.

I hear from Mr. McDowell, an American missionary, who has just come from Gevver, that all the Kurds there are putting themselves under the Sheikh's protection. After having made their submission, and leaving his presence, they curse him openly, and say they are forced to become his servants, because, if they did not, the Government could not protect them against him.

It would thus seem that he is extending his sway to the north as well as to the south, though I do not think he can possibly seize Amadia and Rowanduz, as suggested in Mr. Rassam's news-letter; not that the Government in the Vilayet of Mosul would prevent him, but those places are practically ruled by their own Kurdish Chiefs, who would, I think, give the Sheikh, or any other intruder, some trouble.

I have often spoken to Turks on this subject, and this is the view they take. They say that the Sheikh is powerful because he is rich: he can bribe, he has a host of armed retainers, and he is ambitious and crafty. But they say that he is not a man to be feared, as he has not the power of inspiring devotion and fanaticism amongst his followers, which his father had. That these latter fear him more than venerate him, and would desert his cause, or at any rate could not withstand Turkish troops, whenever the Government chose to deal with him. They affect not to believe the tales of his intriguing with Russia, for they say he is far too well off under the present régime to desire any change. But that these tales are no new thing I may point out by referring to Major Maunsell's despatch No. 41, of the 22nd October, 1900.

As to the fact that he keeps the Syrian Matran (Nestorian Archbishop) a close prisoner, and uses the latter's seal to further his own ends, the Turks know exactly how much importance to attach to this seal, though I admit that it may at times serve their

purpose to pretend it is genuine. Their point of view is that the Matran is better where he is than with the Russians, and their suspicions of the prelate would seem to be borne out by Captain Elliott's despatch No. 25, of the 10th October, 1898.

No attempts have been made by the authorities to punish the Sheikh for his murder of a Nestorian Bishop, or for his attempted murder of the Kaïmakam. And I am afraid that when the Turks talk of the Sheikh's power being due to his wealth, it means that his immunity is, in no small degree, attributable to the number of officials who are his pensioners.

As to his intentions in Gevver, the Vali said to me confidentially that he wished the Sheikh would get hold of Gevver, and, if necessary, all Hekkiari too, for he would administer these districts better than the present officials. He says that, as the Sheikh's wealth depends upon his people, it pays him to study their interests, whereas a Turkish official usually tries to fill his own pocket as quickly as possible, regardless of the future welfare of the country of which he is temporarily in charge. He also avers that Shemdinan, where the Sheikh is actually, though not nominally, the Governor, is one of the best administered cazas in the vilayet. There is probably something in this view, and if an inquiry could be made on the spot, I think it might be found that the rayah population is better off under the Sheikh than under the ordinary Turkish official, as long as the people do not question his authority, or have disputes with Moslems. I have myself noticed similar cases in the Mosul Vilayet, especially at Rowanduz and Zakho, where the Government is practically in the hands of the local Kurdish families, and the people, on the whole, prefer that it should be so.

Another rumour regarding the Sheikh is that he is preparing to attack Tiyari and the other semi-independent Nestorian districts. In this he would have the sympathy of a strong section of Turks, especially the military, who feel it a stigma on them that these Christian tribes have been allowed to maintain themselves so long in a semi-independent position. It is due to the present Vali that the military have never been allowed to operate against them. If there should eventually prove to be truth in this rumour I think I should be justified in asking the Vali to stop the Sheikh, and in pointing out to him that such operations would not be favourably viewed by public opinion in England, which has always been interested in these Nestorian mountaineers, especially as such operations would be of a religious character, and would doubtless take the form of a crusade and massacre, like those undertaken by Bedr Khan Bey and Nurulla Bey, when England intervened to put a stop to them.

It is said that one object of the Government in encouraging the Sheikh is to be able to use him as a threat against Persia, if necessary. To be this he must be kept contented with the Turkish Government, and the example of his father makes him always an object of apprehension to the Persians.

I think it is far more probable that they would like to use him as a catspaw against the independent Nestorians. The blame could always be put on the Sheikh, and the Government could represent itself as trying in vain to protect the Christians against him.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 25.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 20.)

(No. 188.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 14, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship an extract from the "Levant Herald," reporting that a meeting was held here yesterday to constitute the Bagdad Railway Company.

Mr. Babington Smith, one of the designated British Directors, refrained from attending in accordance with instructions received from Sir Clinton Dawkins.

M. Auboyneau, Director-General of the Ottoman Bank, and one of the French Directors, was good enough to call in the afternoon to inform me that he and two other French Directors had assisted at the meeting, that a difficulty arose in consequence of Dr. Zander proposing to subscribe on behalf of the Deutsche Bank for the full amount of the capital of 15 million francs, that he (M. Auboyneau) said that in this case he would take no part in the proceedings; and that eventually the matter was settled by Dr. Zander agreeing to sign as "Mandataire" of the other groups.

I gathered that this incident left a disagreeable impression upon M. Auboyneau, and that he is now more convinced than ever of the necessity of the English and French groups acting in close agreement with each other.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Extract from "Levant Herald," April 14, 1903.

THE BAGDAD RAILWAY.—A meeting was held yesterday morning in the residence of Dr. Zander, General Manager of the Anatolian Railway, to constitute the new Company which, in accordance with the terms of the Convention between the Anatolian Company and the Imperial Government, is to undertake the construction of the Konieh-Bagdad-Basrah-Persian Gulf Railway. Dr. Zander, with M. E. Huguenimaud M. C. Testa, represented the German Syndicate, and M. G. Auboyneau and Commander Berger attended on behalf of the French group. The Company has been founded under the style of "Société du Chemin de Fer Impérial Ottoman de Bagdad," with a capital of 15 million francs, of which one-tenth was paid up by the gentlemen present at the meeting either for their own account or for that of the Syndicates they represented. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the Government also subscribed one-tenth of the shares to be issued.

After the accomplishment of these formalities, the meeting proceeded to the election of the Board of Directors. Herr A. Gwinner, Manager of the Deutsche Bank and Chairman of the Anatolian Railway, was elected Chairman of the new Company; and M. de Verne, Director of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Paris, Vice-Chairman.

M. Huguenin, Assistant General Manager of the Anatolian Railway, left yesterday for Berlin and Paris.

No. 26.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 20.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Lord George Hamilton, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 9th April, relative to the dispatch of Turkish troops to Bussorah.

India Office, April 20, 1903.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Lord G. Hamilton to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, April 9, 1903.*

TURKISH transport with 1,120 troops on board is reported by Consul at Port Said to have left for Bussorah.

No. 27.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

(No. 96.)
(Extract.) *Foreign Office, April 22, 1903.*

THE Russian Ambassador asked me to-day whether I had any further news with regard to the Bagdad Railway which we had discussed on the occasion of our last meeting.

I said that a statement would probably be made by the Prime Minister at an early date, and that I advised him to await this before making any further communication to the Russian Government.

I told him, however, in confidence that in our view it was impossible for us in present circumstances to give assurances of support to the promoters of the project. It might at some future time be presented to us in a shape which would justify us in encouraging it, but there were several conditions on which we should have to insist. Our support would certainly not be forthcoming unless the enterprise were to be given a really international character. My own idea was that if we were able to substitute for the purely German Railway which now held the field in the north-west of Asia Minor an international line extending from sea to sea, the development of the project would be for the general interest.

I added that I understood that a Turkish guarantee was indispensable, and that the necessary funds could only be provided by means of an increase of the Turkish Customs Tariff which again could not be obtained without the consent of the Powers having Commercial Treaties with Turkey of whom Russia was one.

His Excellency received my remarks with evident satisfaction.

No. 28.

Debate in the House of Commons, April 23, 1903.

THE BAGDAD RAILWAY.

Mr. Gibson Bowles asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government had considered that by Article 8 of the Decree of Mouharrem (8th December, 1881) any surplus arising from a modification in the Turkish Customs Tariff, in case of revision of the Treaties of Commerce, was ceded by the Turkish Government for the service of the Turkish Debt in an absolute and irrevocable manner until the complete extinction of the said Debt; and, in view of that cession, could he state how any part of any sums arising from an increase of Turkish customs duties could be applied towards the provision of payments for the kilometric guarantee proposed to be given to the Bagdad Railway, or be in any other way used in guaranteeing that railway.

Mr. Balfour.—A modification of the terms of Article 8 would be necessary in order that any part of the surplus arising from an increase of the customs duties might be applied to purposes other than the service of the Turkish Debt. The consent of the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt, who represent the bondholders, would be necessary for any such arrangement.

Mr. Gibson Bowles asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government were aware that on the 31st January, 1902, the Directors of the Anatolian Society, which had the Concession for the construction of the Konia–Bagdad–Bussorah Railway, proposed, by a written communication to the Turkish Government, that the desired kilometric guarantee for the railway of 1,400,000*l.* should be secured on an increase of the Turkish customs duties, on the creation of five monopolies of petroleum, alcohol, matches, cards, and cigarette paper, and on an arrangement for the unification of the Turkish Debt; would these monopolies render necessary the prohibition of import into Turkey of, or the imposition of prohibitive duties on, the five articles named? Were His Majesty's Government consulted as to this proposal? Had they received a copy of the communication in question, and, if so, would they lay it on the table of the House?

Mr. Balfour.—His Majesty's Government have not been informed of the communication to which my honourable friend refers, nor have they been consulted as to the proposal contained in it.

Mr. Gibson Bowles.—Have the Government not received any information on this matter from the Ambassador at Constantinople?

Mr. Balfour.—I understand that we have no such communication from the Ambassador to place before the House.

Mr. Norman (Wolverhampton, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury if he would state whom the British Government had negotiated with, or been in communication with, or derived its information from, in the matter of the Bagdad Railway; and whether he would state who were the members of the British group of financiers interested in the proposal to provide part of the capital of the Bagdad Railway.

Mr. Balfour.—The answer to these questions is in the negative.

Mr. Gibson Bowles asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government had received a copy of the Turkish Convention relating to the Anatolian

Railway Company (Bagdad line), quoted by Mr. Vice-Consul Waugh in his Report dated the 9th March, 1903, as showing that the entire management of the line from Konia to the Persian Gulf is secured in German hands, independent of the nationality of the capital which might be raised to build the line, and, if so, when was it proposed to lay it upon the table of the House.

Mr. Balfour.—A copy of the Convention between the Turkish Government and the Anatolian Railway Company to which my honourable friend refers is in our possession. This Convention, a summary of which was published in the "Times" of yesterday, leaves the whole scheme of railway development through Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf entirely in the hands of a Company under German control. To such a Convention we have never been asked to assent, and we could not in any case be a party to it. (Loud cheers.) The alternative arrangements which have lately been under our consideration were, on the contrary, designed to place the railway, including the existing Anatolian Railway, throughout its whole length from sea to sea under international control, and to prevent the possibility of preferential treatment for the goods or subjects of any one country. In these arrangements it was suggested, *inter alia*, that equal powers of control, construction, and management should be given to German, French, and English interests. After careful consideration of these proposals, His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that they do not give to this country sufficient security for the application of the principles above referred to—(cheers)—and they have therefore intimated that they are unable to give the suggested assurances with regard to the policy which they might hereafter adopt as to the conveyance of the Indian mails by the projected route, as to facilities at Koweit, or as to the appropriation of a part of the Turkish customs revenue in aid of the contemplated guarantee. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Gibson Bowles.—I am obliged to the right honourable gentleman for his answer, and I congratulate the Government on their decision. (Cheers.)

No. 29.

Question asked in the House of Commons, April 23, 1903.

Sir Joseph Leese.—To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to the terms of Article IV of the Convention alleged to have been granted to the Anatolian Railway Company by the Turkish Government, whereby the proposed railway to Bagdad and Bussorah is to be finished within eight years, subject to any delays arising out of *force majeure*, such as a war between European Powers or a radical change in the financial situation of England, Germany, or France; and whether he is able to explain the meaning of the reference to the financial situation of England in this said Article.

Answer.

As I have already stated, His Majesty's Government are in possession of a copy of the Convention in question; but they are in no sense parties to it, and cannot, therefore, be called upon to explain its provisions.

No. 30.

Question asked in the House of Commons, April 23, 1903.

Mr. Gibson Bowles.—To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government had considered that by Article VIII of the Decree of Mouharrem (8th December, 1881), any surplus arising from a modification in the Turkish Customs Tariff in case of revision of the Treaties of Commerce was ceded by the Turkish Government for the service of the Turkish Debt in an absolute and irrevocable manner until the complete extinction of the said debt; and, in view of that cession, could he state how any part of any sums arising from an increase of Turkish customs duties could be applied towards the provision of payments for the kilometric guarantee proposed to be given to the Bagdad Railway, or be in any other way used in guaranteeing that railway.

Answer.

A modification of the terms of Article VIII would be necessary in order that any part of the surplus arising from an increase of the customs duties might be applied to purposes other than the service of the Turkish Debt. The consent of the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt, who represent the bondholders, would be necessary for any such arrangement.

No. 31.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 105.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, April 23, 1903.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a letter addressed to the Prime Minister by Mr. Hills,* in which he states that, according to information supplied to him from Haifa, the railway from that place to Mezerib is to be constructed by a German-Belgian Company, and the so-called Hedjaz Railway is in reality a strategical line intended for purposes of defence against Great Britain.

In view of these reports Mr. Hills inquires whether His Majesty's Government would wish that use should be made in the interest of this country of the rights of the Syria-Ottoman Railway, under the Concession which he holds.

It is presumed that Mr. Hills alludes to the right which remains secured to the Syria-Ottoman Railway Company by their recent Agreement with the Turkish Government that the Company shall have the first offer of the Contract for the Haifa–Damascus Railway if that Government should decide to have the line built by a foreign Company.

I request that your Excellency will furnish me with your observations on Mr. Hills letter. It is presumed that His Majesty's Embassy is in possession of the exact text of the Agreement made by the Company with the Turkish Government. It would be desirable that a copy should be in the archives of this Department, and if your Excellency is unable to supply one, application will be made to Mr. Hills.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 32.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 208.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 22, 1903.*

A CORRESPONDENCE passed between this Embassy and your Lordship's Office in 1900, terminating with Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 146, Commercial, of the 9th October of that year, relative to the fears entertained by the Mersina–Adana Railway Company that the extension of the Bagdad Railway into their country, with access to a port in the Gulf of Alexandretta, would seriously injure their interests.

The recent development of the Bagdad Railway scheme has revived these apprehensions, and I believe that the Mersina–Adana Railway Company, being actually an Anglo-French undertaking, have now, through the intervention of the French Government, obtained a promise from the French group interested in the Bagdad Railway to purchase their line when the Bagdad Railway is extended to Adana. I understand that the German participators in the Bagdad Railway scheme have confirmed this promise.

The British share and bondholders in the Mersina–Adana Railway desire me to express their hope that His Majesty's Government will support their interests, and will move the British group of financiers who may participate in the Bagdad Railway enterprise to give a similar promise.

Mr. Pears, Vice-Chairman of the Company, and Sir W. Whittall, a Director, and one of the principal shareholders, are anxious that His Majesty's Government should press the Bagdad Railway Company to come to an agreement determining at once the conditions of purchase.

* No. 29.

I told them that this seemed to me beyond what could properly be expected, inasmuch as it was a commercial transaction outside the province of His Majesty's Government, the terms of which must be settled by the two parties directly concerned. Besides, I thought it most unlikely that the Bagdad Company would bind themselves to a contract which would not come into operation until the approach of their railway threatened to prejudice the Mersina-Adana line.

I added, however, that I felt sure your Lordship would be willing to give the Company, as far as it was British, any assistance you properly could.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 33.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received April* 27.)

(No. 212.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 22, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a Memorandum respecting a warning received by the Armenian Patriarch as to a contemplated Armenian disturbance during Easter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Mr. Mariniitsch to Mr. Block.

(No. 122. Confidential.) *April* 20, 1903.

I WENT yesterday, as usual, to pay the complimentary calls upon the two Armenian Patriarchs.

Mgr. Emmanuelian (the Catholic Patriarch) requested me to convey to the Ambassador his best thanks for the kind attention shown to him by his Excellency.

Mgr. Ormanian (Gregorian Patriarch), after thanking his Excellency for his kindness, stated to me confidentially that the Turkish Government had warned him that, according to intelligence received by the Police authorities, the Armenian Revolutionist Committee had the intention of creating disturbances in this capital on the occasion of the Easter festivities. The Patriarch had therefore been requested to take measures accordingly. Mgr. Ormanian had replied that, although no news confirming such a statement had reached the Patriarchate of Koum Kapou, he would nevertheless take proper steps in the matter. He had, therefore, at once sent instructions to the clergy of all the Armeno-Gregorian Churches of Constantinople. But, he added, the events feared had happily not taken place and the Easter festivities were passing very quietly.

No. 34.

Sir J. Kennedy to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received April* 27.)

(No. 26. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Bucharest, April* 22, 1903.

IN view of the interesting correspondence published in the "Times" respecting the proposed Bagdad Railway, I venture to report a few remarks recently made to me by the Russian Minister at this Court.

M. de Giers observed that the Russian Government were unfavourable to the Bagdad Railway scheme on political and commercial grounds. He said that the German Company of the Anatolian Railway held the shares, which would give them the control of the whole line from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf, and that the new Turkish Government bonds or "obligations" to be presently issued would be debentures, and would give the holders no control over the management or rules of the projected railway, which would be entirely in the hands of the above German Company.

M. de Giers further remarked that M. de Witte had advised the Russian banks not to subscribe to the new "obligations," as the commercial prospects of the new railway were not good, and that, on political grounds, the Russian Government were opposed to the idea of a railway which would connect the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 35.

Questions asked in the House of Commons, April 29, 1903.

Mr. Gibson Bowles,—To ask the First Lord of the Treasury was there any, and, if so, what foundation for the statements recently and generally circulated that renewed proposals had been made by foreign Governments or financiers with a view to obtain the participation of His Majesty's Government in the Bagdad Railway scheme; and had His Majesty's Government any intention of reconsidering their decision as to this railway, or of entering into new communications with regard thereto.

Answer.

This matter stands exactly where it was when I replied to my Honourable friend on Thursday last.

Mr. Gibson Bowles,—To ask the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether any communication with regard to the Bagdad Railway scheme had now been received from the British Ambassador at Constantinople; and would His Majesty's Government, before departing from or varying their decision already arrived at with regard to this scheme, lay any such communication on the table of the House.

Answer.

Communications have at various times been received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject of the Bagdad Railway. If circumstances should arise which might cause a modification of the views of His Majesty's Government, as recently announced, they would consider whether any correspondence could be laid before the House.

Mr. Gibson Bowles,—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what date did His Majesty's Government receive the copy now in their possession of the Convention between the Turkish Government and the concessionnaires of the Anatolian Railway Company (Bagdad line), quoted by Mr. Vice-Consul Waugh in his report dated the 9th March, and received at the Foreign Office on the 16th March last.

Answer.

It would be unusual to give the date unless His Majesty's Government were prepared to lay the Paper upon the table.

No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 4.)

(No. 221.)

Constantinople, April 29, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Mr. Whitehead's despatch No. 74, Confidential, of the 10th February last, relative to the proposed unification of the Ottoman Debt and the counter-proposal for an increase of ¼ per cent. in the interest payable on the present bonds, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship the papers concerning the Tribunal of Arbitration which has been appointed to consider the latter proposal.

The Tribunal consists of the following persons:—For the Ottoman Government, his Excellency Jelal Bey, Minister of Public Instruction, and M. Beernaert, formerly President of the Council of Ministers in Belgium; for the Council of the Public Debt, M. Caillaux, formerly French Minister of Finance; and M. Ador, formerly President of the Swiss National Council.

The Tribunal of Arbitration was to have met for the first time yesterday, the 28th instant, but at the last moment the Imperial Government declared that their case was not ready, and that they desired a postponement.

In spite of this declaration, the members of the Tribunal representing the Council of the Debt met yesterday in the absence of the Turkish members, declared the Tribunal of Arbitration to be constituted, and fixed the next meeting for Saturday, the 2nd proximo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 36.

Compromis entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et le Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, en vue de l'Arbitrage sur la Question de l'Augmentation du Taux de l'Intérêt.

LE Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, représenté par son Excellence Réchad Pacha, Ministre des Finances, dûment autorisé aux effets des présentes par Iradé Impérial, d'une part; et le Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, représenté par M. le Commandant Léon Berger, son Président, d'autre part; ont conclu le compromis suivant, en vue du Règlement par un Tribunal Arbitral, conformément à l'Article 19 du Décret Impérial du 28 Mouharrem, 1299 (8 Décembre, 1881), du différend surgi entre eux au sujet de l'application des clauses du dit Décret Impérial relatives à la distribution aux porteurs d'un quart pour cent supplémentaire de l'intérêt.

Article 1. Le Tribunal Arbitral est composé de quatre personnes, choisies par les deux parties comme suit:—

Pour le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, son Excellence Djélal Bey, Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, et M. Beernaert, ancien Président du Conseil des Ministres de Belgique; pour le Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, M. Caillaux, ancien Ministre des Finances de France; et M. Ador, ancien Président du Conseil National Suisse.

Art. 2. La question à soumettre aux Arbitres consiste à examiner et à décider ce qui suit:—

Conformément aux dispositions du Décret et selon les comptes, faut-il, oui ou non, distribuer aux porteurs, en dehors du 1 pour cent actuel, ¼ pour cent en plus?

Les deux parties conservent le droit d'exposer et de développer leurs demandes et arguments.

Art. 3. En cas d'absence ou de maladie ou de toute autre empêchement de l'un des Arbitres, si les autres Arbitres se rendent compte de ce fait, ou si l'un d'eux s'abstient d'émettre son avis, les autres Arbitres dresseront à cet effet un procès-verbal. La partie qui l'a nommé devra, à la demande de l'autre partie faite par voie du Commissaire Impérial à la Dette Publique Ottomane, choisir un nouvel Arbitre dans un délai de huit jours. Faute de quoi, le Ministre Président du Conseil d'État Ottoman procèdera à ce choix et le fera connaître directement aux Arbitres dans les

dix jours de la demande qui lui en sera faite par l'autre partie, par la voie du même Commissaire Impérial et sans autre formalité.

Art. 4. Les Arbitres se réuniront à Constantinople avant le 15 (28) Avril prochain. Ils devront prononcer, signer, et notifier directement aux parties leur sentence, dans un délai d'un mois, au plus tard, à partir du jour de leur réunion, au cas où il n'y aurait pas lieu pour eux de se faire départager par un Surarbitre.

Dans le cas prévu à l'Article 3, si le remplacement de l'un des Arbitres tombe aux derniers jours de ce délai, ce dernier sera, à la demande du nouvel Arbitre, prolongé encore de quinze jours.

Art. 5. Avant la réunion du Tribunal Arbitral, les parties devront se communiquer réciproquement par voie du même Commissaire Impérial dans le délai d'un mois, à partir de ce jour, les requêtes contenant leurs demandes et réclamations, et elles signifieront l'une à l'autre leurs répliques par la même voie et dans le délai de quinze jours.

Les Arbitres procéderont à leur examen sur les Mémoires, rapports, et répliques présentés par les deux parties, et ils entendront les explications verbales et écrites de celles-ci.

Art. 6. La sentence arbitrale sera motivée d'après les lois civiles Ottomanes, mais les Arbitres ne seront pas obligés de suivre les formalités et les délais établis dans le Code de Procédure. Ils doivent faire baser cette sentence sur le Décret du 28 Mouharrem, 1299, et se servir, à titre d'interprétation et d'éclaircissement, des Protocoles contenant les délibérations de la Commission qui a élaboré le projet du dit Décret.

Art. 7. Les Arbitres rendront leur sentence à l'unanimité ou à la majorité des voix. Cette sentence sera définitive et ne sera susceptible d'aucun recours.

Art. 8. Au cas de partage des voix, les Arbitres choisiront un Surarbitre.

Art. 9. Le Surarbitre devra se prononcer dans un délai de trente jours à partir de la date où il aura accepté cette mission et il sera tenu de se ranger à l'une des opinions émises par les Arbitres contraire. La décision du Surarbitre sera définitive et obligatoire.

Art. 10. Quel que soit le résultat de la sentence des Arbitres ou du Surarbitre, les honoraires qui leur seront payés seront supportés par moitié par les deux parties.

Les Arbitres se prononceront également sur les honoraires qui leur seront dus et qui doivent être répartis entre eux à parts égales.

Le présent compromis a été fait en double à Constantinople, le 17 Février, 1318 (17 Février (2 Mars), 1903).

Le Ministre des Finances,
(Signé) AHMED RÉCHAD.
Commandant LÉON BERGER.

Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

List of Inclosures.

Inclosure No. 1.—Observations du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman en réponse au Mémoire du Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane en date du 4 (17) Avril, 1903.

Inclosure No. 2.—Conclusions du Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane.

Inclosure No. 3.—Conclusions pour le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman contre le Conseil de la Dette Publique Ottomane.

Inclosure No. 4.—Mémoire présenté par le Conseil d'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane en réponse aux conclusions du 20 Mars (2 Avril), 1903, du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

No. 37.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 224.)

Constantinople, May 1, 1903.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, and which was written before the death of Mar Shimun, reporting on the intrigues of Nimrod, the latter's cousin, whose intentions seem to be to procure a schism in the Nestorian Church, and to subject a portion of that congregation to the French, and therefore Catholic, influence in the place of the English, or Protestant, influence under which they have hitherto considered themselves to be.

A later despatch (copy of which is also inclosed) shows how, on the death of Mar Shimun, the Vali of Van complained that no notice of the event had reached him from the representatives of the deceased, and that he only learnt it through the British Vice-Consul and Nimrod in question.

Captain Tyrrell's attitude in impressing upon the Nestorians the necessity of addressing the Ottoman officials at first hand on important occasions is correct and praiseworthy, and, if an opportunity offers, I will endeavour to dissuade the Grand Vizier from allowing any encouragement to be given to Nimrod by the bestowal on him of a decoration or a Government appointment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)

Van, April 1, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to send you a Report of affairs among the Nestorians, viewed in the light of recent events, most of which have been brought to my notice by the Rev. W. H. Browne.

When I was at Kochannes last November, Nimrod, Mar Shimun's cousin, who has often been alluded to in despatches from this Vice-Consulate, was there, he having been forgiven and received back by Mar Shimun after many acts of treachery and intrigue against the interests of his own nation. Nimrod is an ambitious man and an arch intriguer. He was practically the only one among the prominent Nestorians who can speak Turkish, and, on this account, he has long enjoyed a certain prestige as their go-between with their Government, and has generally proved himself to be untrustworthy, and to be merely seeking his own aggrandizement. When I was in Kochannes he was very humble, doing his best to win back Mar Shimun's favour, and was very much distrusted by his compatriots.

Quite lately he asked Mar Shimun's permission to go to Julamerk to settle some of the affairs of the "millet;" and, having obtained it, started off for Mosul, whither he had been summoned by the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon. It was well known in Kochannes before he started that he had received a sort of ultimatum from the Chaldean Patriarch, to the effect that he was to go down at once to Mosul to be received into the Church of Rome, or he would receive nothing more from them. They were, in fact, tired of his long dalliance with them, and of supplying him with money without any tangible result.

If it were merely a matter of a man changing his religion, it would not concern anybody else. But, unfortunately, politics and religion are very much mixed up in this country, and I have no doubt that the intention is to draw as many Nestorians as possible after Nimrod by pointing to the benefits which will have accrued to him on deserting his own Church, and to establish a section of the Nestorians, dissenting from their own Church, with Nimrod at their head, and under "French protection"—a phrase which the ignorant people are led to believe means a great deal more than it does, and which is continually worked up for all it is worth.

The telegram of summons that Nimrod received stated that the Chaldean Patriarch had seventy-five decorations to be distributed among Nestorians, that Père de France had now returned to Van as a regular Consul, that the French Government had bestowed

a decoration on the Vali, who was now the good friend of the French, and would do anything they wished, &c.

On his way down through Tiyari, Nimrod stated that, thanks to French protection, he was going with the Vali's special sanction, that he was to receive a decoration from the Sultan when he got to Mosul, and that there are to be decorations and salaries for all the Maliks and other men who follow his example. It appears that he has thus been able to seduce, to some extent, Malik Babu of T'khuma, who is, as you are aware, a very shifty and disloyal man. Their plan, divulged by some of Babu's adherents, seems to be that, after Nimrod has received his expected decoration, they will propose to Mar Shimun that in future he shall confine himself entirely to ecclesiastical affairs. The setting up of Maliks and reisses, and the affairs between the people and the Government will be managed by Nimrod. If Mar Shimun and the people do not agree to this, they will be declared to be recalcitrant, and rebellious against the Government, and will be threatened with the Turkish troops, the influence of France, and that of Nimrod, now a Government official.

This scheme deliberately recognizes the possibility of aid by Turkish troops, and, if it is carried out, the schism which will inevitably occur will give the Turks the excuse they want to meddle with Nestorian affairs, and to enter their country. They will be only too ready to take it, saying that a part of the "people" have invited their intervention.

England is regarded by the Nestorians, and, to a lesser extent, by the Turks, as the protector of the Nestorian millet and religion; and it is generally considered to be, in no small degree, owing to her action in the past, that the Nestorians have so far continued to exist as a separate community. If Nimrod, backed by the Turkish Government, is successful to any extent in his schemes, or, in his desire for decorations and advancement, he will be able to point to the superiority of French protection, and I am convinced that the French here are working, through religion, for political prestige among these ignorant people.

It has seemed to me for some time that the Roman Catholics are making very serious efforts to bring over the whole Nestorian nation. I first noticed this in Mosul, from the inquiries made of me by the Chaldean Patriarch, when he heard that I had lately visited Kochannes. Then there was the fact of a Chaldean bishop being appointed to Van—as mentioned in my No. 3 of the 31st January. Then there is Père de France's return from Europe, and the fact that, in travelling down to Sairt and back, he always gave himself out to be a Consul, as noticed in the above-mentioned despatch, and corroborated by the Patriarch's telegram, alluded to in paragraph 5. And now Père Simon, one of the Dominican Fathers here, has just left for Mosul. He intends to return in two or three months, and I shall not be surprised if he does so by way of Hekkiari, traversing the Nestorian country.

Unfortunately, this is not simply a religious question. The choice of the agent, Nimrod, is singularly unfortunate, as no one can believe that he is actuated by proper motives, or that the dictates of conscience have anything to do with his schemes. His immorality is notorious; he has repeatedly shown himself a man seeking only his own benefit, and oblivious of, if not hostile to, that of his nation. By reason of his superior education, his versatility, and *savoir-faire* (one might say he is the only prominent Nestorian possessing these qualities), he is a dangerous intriguer.

It seemed to me that it will be fatal to the Nestorian millet—ignorant, divided, and weakly ruled as it is—if such a schism can be made as would follow any marked success of Nimrod, and prejudicial to English prestige in this part of the country.

I would humbly submit that the first step to maintain the British interests, which I think are threatened, would be to prevent the bestowal of any decoration or mark of official favour upon Nimrod, or of any position to be held by him under Government in this vilayet, or in the Vilayet of Mosul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 37

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 13.)

Van, April 8, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram of the 3rd instant, in which I announced the death of the Mar Shimun, or Patriarch of the Nestorians.

Mr. Browne, in his telegram to me, asked that arrangements might be made for the Matran to go up to Kochannes from Shemdinan to preside at the ceremony of installing the new Mar Shimun.

This Matran is at present practically kept as a prisoner by Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq. His presence appears to be necessary for the due performance of the Nestorian rites on this occasion; and the Vali has given orders, through the Mutessarif of Hekkiari, that he is to be allowed to proceed to Kochannes. The Vali complains that no notice of Mar Shimun's death was sent to him from Kochannes, and that he was only informed first through me, and secondly by a wire from Mosul, sent by Nimrod, about whose departure from Kochannes I wrote at length in my No. 14 of the 1st April.

He says that he knows Nimrod is a rascal, and that the late Mar Shimun was loyal; but that, if he had not known this, he would have drawn an opposite conclusion from the fact that, whereas no one at Kochannes took the trouble to inform him, Nimrod, on the other hand, sent him a wire promptly, apprising him of Mar Shimun's death, protesting his loyalty, and asserting his readiness to return to Julamerk and place himself at the disposal of the Government.

There is a tendency among the Nestorians to look upon the British Consul as their representative, and it is a point upon which the Turks are very sensitive. I have written to Mr. Browne to ask him to impress upon the new Mar Shimun that, as he is a Turkish subject, it is to his interest to work with the Turkish officials, and study their idiosyncracies, which at present no Nestorian does, except Nimrod. That he should inform the Vali of any important event, instead of allowing the news to reach him at second hand, and that if he has any complaints or petitions to make they should be sent through the proper channels, though I shall always be glad to hear of these latter, and give what help I legitimately can. I have also asked him to disabuse the Nestorians as far as he can of the idea that the British Consul is their "vekil," as I understand that they hold the same position towards me as any other Christians, viz., that I am to try and prevent oppression and injustice being done to them, by means of personal influence and friendly representation to the Turkish authorities.

I have observed that the Turks are, naturally, very jealous of any of their subjects considering themselves as under foreign protection, and avowedly looking to foreign intervention.

Again referring to my No. 11 of the 1st April, the Vali assures me that, as far as he is concerned, Nimrod will receive no decoration or Government appointment, but that he is such a plausible man, and has been making so great a show of loyalty to the Turkish Government lately, that it is quite possible he may have persuaded the Vali of Mosul to recommend him, or may have himself sent a telegram to Constantinople in a similar train to the one he sent here, which might have the result he desires.

The Vali says he agrees with me that such a result would be against the true interests of the Nestorian community, and would probably have a very bad effect among them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 38.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received May* 11.)

(No. 231.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 4, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, reporting on his recent tours in that vilayet. A Memorandum by Colonel Maunsell on Major Newmarch's observations with regard to the Perso-Turkish frontier in the vicinity of Mr. Davey's oil enterprise is also inclosed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 38.

Acting Consul-General Newmarch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 133. Confidential.)
Sir, *Bagdad, March* 19, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for your Excellency's information, a copy of my despatch (with inclosures) to the Government of India forwarding some notes made by me on two recent tours in the Bagdad Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. S. NEWMARCH, *Major,*
Acting British Consul-General.

Inclosure 2 in No. 38.

Acting Consul-General Newmarch to Government of India.

Sir, *Bagdad, March* 18, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to submit some notes made by me on two recent tours in the Bagdad Vilayet.

2. I was not able to make exact measurements of rivers, bridges, and other such defiles because if I had been seen doing this it would probably have excited the suspicion of the Turkish authorities, who would then perhaps have put obstacles in the way of my travelling about the country. As it was, I was most cordially received by the Turkish authorities at every place I visited.

At Bakuba they furnished my room for me; at Sharaban they offered to show me where the best shooting was (because this was the professed object of my journey), and escorted me out of the town for several miles; at Khanakin I and my camp were exempted from the ordinary quarantine regulations on the frontier, and the Kaïmakam was ready to place at my disposal as many zaptiehs as I wanted; at Balad Ruz I was accommodated in the farm-house; my horses were stabled there and great hospitality shown to me; and at Mandali I was received by an escort of cavalry as I approached the town; the Kaïmakam had tea and coffee ready for me on my arrival, and paid me a formal visit as soon as my camp was pitched. He was also most careful to guard my camp during the night and came out to see me off on my departure, regretting that he had not been able to do more for me.

3. The main objects of my tour to Chiah Surkh and Kasr-i-Sherin were (1) to make myself acquainted with this important trade route; (2) to see the places to which the Turkish authorities had six months ago refused to allow Mr. d'Arcy's caravans to pass; (3) to see the petroleum oil-wells at Chiah Surkh, because I have constant correspondence about this enterprise; and (4) to make the acquaintance of the local Turkish officials and learn what I could of the nature of the intervening country.

4. If the Intelligence Department or the Foreign Department wish for any special kind of information on my future tours I shall be glad to know specifically what sort of information is likely to be useful.

5. The route from Khanakin to Bagdad is the chief and almost the only caravan route between Persia and Mesopotamia. There is very little traffic along the Mandali road, and southwards there is practically no other trade route till Mohammerah is reached.

6. The Khanakin route could easily and should be improved into a fair-weather road, but it is hopeless to expect this under Turkish administration. The ranges of low hills over which this route passes present no serious obstacle to the construction of a railway, and I am informed on good authority that if the Bagdad Railway is ever completed, this will be one of its branches, and a very remunerative branch it will prove, for the pilgrim traffic alone along this route would make it remunerative. It is the main route for the Persian pilgrims to Karbala and Nejef—the sacred cities of the Shiah sect of Mahommedans—and at nearly all seasons of the year this stream of pilgrims is almost incessant.

At present this route is "passable for all arms" in dry weather as far as Khanakin, but many of the little bridges and culverts along it are in a precarious condition and it is impossible to say how long they will last or whether they will ever be repaired.

7. There is no possible objection to the route taken by Mr. d'Arcy's caravans, and

the objections made some months ago by the local authorities were, in my opinion, purely obstructive and without any reasonable foundation. Those objections, however, have since been overcome, and there is no difficulty now to the passage of these caravans.

8. I attach herewith a copy of the Concession given to Mr. d'Arcy by the Shah of Persia, and beg that it may be treated as a Confidential paper. There can be no doubt that this is a large enterprise, and that, if successful, it will have very far-reaching results. At present I understand that about 70,000*l.* has been expended by Mr. d'Arcy without any very apparent return, for oil has not yet been obtained; but there seems to be little doubt on the part of those qualified to know that oil abounds in the regions to which the Concession relates.

9. As regards Bakuba, I note that one of my predecessors, Mr. (now Sir) Trevor Chichele Plowden, in his letter to the Government of India, No. 115, dated the 24th November, 1881, gave the revenue of this Kaïmakamlik as £T. 17,250 and its expenses as £T. 5,250. The Kaïmakam himself informed me that the gross revenue now was about £T. 50,000 and the expenditure about £T. 20,000.

The town of Bakuba has certainly increased considerably since 1881, and the number of houses and the population are greater now than the figures given by Mr. Plowden. If the other villages of the Kaïmakamlik have increased proportionately to Bakuba, the increased revenue and expenditure stated by the Kaïmakam are not incredible, though possibly they are a little exaggerated.

10. It is perhaps worth recording here, in view of the possible developments of Mr. d'Arcy's Concession, that both at Murkuz and at Mandali the local Turkish officials volunteered and rather emphasized the statement that in these parts the boundary between Persia and Turkey was unfixed, and that Turkey claimed a frontier considerably further east than the present one. In each case I turned the conversation, and avoided the subject, but it struck me at the time that they had each probably been instructed to make the remark.

11. As regards the tour to Mandali, I have little to add to the notes herewith submitted. There is very little traffic along this route, and it does not seem probable that it will increase in the near future.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. S. NEWMARCH, *Major.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 38.

Notes by Acting Consul-General Newmarch of a Tour from Bagdad to Khanakin, Hosh-Khoori, Chiah Surkh, Kasr-i-Sherin, and back to Bagdad, viâ Khanakin, in January 1903.

THE road from Bagdad to Khanakin has been often described, but by far the best account of it that I have seen is that by Major Burton,* of the 17th Bengal Lancers. His description of it I can corroborate in almost every particular, but as he traversed it in June and I in January, it presented different aspects to us, and therefore I make the following remarks as supplementary to his report:—

Bagdad to Khan Beni S'ad.—This place is also known as Aerin Khan, but Khan Beni S'ad is by far the more common name.

There is no Serai now outside the Bab-el-Wastani, nor any traces of one. I passed along this road after two days' rain (drizzle), and, though I started twenty-four hours after the rain had stopped, I found the road sticky and slippery, and had to go at a walk most of the way.

I may note here that there is no "road" in the ordinary sense anywhere in the Bagdad Vilayet—all the roads are tracks made by traffic across the desert. Sometimes—*i.e.*, at certain places and in certain seasons—these tracks are pressed down so hard and flat by the traffic over them that they are quite easy for bicycles, and almost too hard for unshod horses. In such circumstances, they are admirable for wheeled traffic, but a shower of rain makes them slippery and difficult, and heavy rain (1 inch) makes them quaggy and almost impassable. I found no walled village at 11 miles, but there is a walled Serai or Khan at about that distance, which may have been intended.

Khan Beni S'ad to Bakuba.—It began to rain slightly (a drizzle) just after I started, and continued to rain all day; the road was difficult and boggy throughout, and in places almost impassable; with a caravan of twenty-two mules, six horses, and a four-wheeled

* Appendix to Routes in Persia, Section III.

cart, it took me eight hours to reach Bakuba (including the passage of the river, which took about one and a-half hours), *i.e.*, a rate of 1½ miles an hour, and this, although I had good men and good mules. At many places, I had to get off and lead my horse through the heavy mud.

Bakuba to Abu Jisra.—I halted at Bakuba one day, to allow the ground to dry, and even then, the country within six miles of Bakuba, to the east, was excessively muddy and difficult. According to my information, forage and supplies were scarce at Abu Jisra, and I do not think there was more than enough for 100 men and horses for one day. The reason is that caravans do not generally stop here, but go right through from Bakuba to Sharaban, or *vice versâ*. I did not stop here myself, because the weather was improving, the accommodation bad, and camping on the mud dangerous. The worst part of the road in wet weather is for a mile before reaching Abu Jisra.

Abu Jisra to Sharaban.—No remarks.

Sharaban to Kizil Robat.—There is a comparatively easy cart track over the Jabal Hamrin Range, by which guns could pass. My cart went over it. It enters the hills a little (about half-a-mile) to the south of the ordinary track, and winds about until it joins the ordinary road again, soon after reaching the summit. My cart, which carried my cook and kitchen, was a four-wheeled country cart, drawn by four mules; it was about 8 feet long and 5 feet wide, sides of tin, and roof about 4 feet high. It accompanied me throughout my tour, and only broke down once owing to the stupidity of the driver in charging a boulder which he might easily have avoided. It was soon repaired with string and rope, and only caused a delay of one hour. This accident did not happen in the Jabal Hamrin range, but between Hosh-Khoori and Chiah Surkh, at a place where the ground was comparatively open, though sloping.

Kizil Robat to Khanakin.—No remarks.

Khanakin to Kasr-i-Sherin.—Major Burton says this road is passable for all arms, and it is true that occasionally carts do go from one town to the other, but I did not let my cart make the attempt, for there are many places on the road where I could see no possibility of a cart going. In my opinion it would be extremely difficult in two or three places, though, perhaps, not impossible for artillery. I rode over the road myself afterwards.

Every one whom I consulted at Khanakin said the road was impassible for carts, and I am disposed to confirm that opinion after seeing the road. It is, however, only at two or three points on the road where this apparent impassibility existed:—

1. About 2 miles from Kasr-i-Sherin, where the road along the hill-side had fallen away, and there was only room enough for one horse at a time.

2. About 5 miles from Kasr-i-Sherin, where the track goes over some sheet rock, which is not only steep, but inclined at an angle sideways. For horses, there are ruts in this rock, worn out by the constant traffic of pilgrims during hundreds of years.

I did not go further east than Kasr-i-Sherin.

Khanakin to Hosh-Khoori.—This is not an ordinary route, but merely the track made and used by Mr. d'Arcy's caravans to get to the petroleum well at Chiah Surkh. Immediately after leaving Khanakin on the east side I circled round the town to the westward, keeping on the east side of the Holwan River, and between it and the rising ground on the right until opposite Baba Mahmud, when I turned northwards in the direction of Murkuz Fort. On reaching this fort, which is occupied by a Turkish officer and about twenty mounted men, I turned north-west across a very stony plain, leaving the fort about a mile on my right. About 2 miles to the north-west beyond Murkuz is Hosh-Khoori, where I camped. The line I followed would be quite easy for all arms; but the plain near Murkuz is excessively stony, covered with large pebbles so close together that a horse cannot help treading on them at almost every step.

There was no water between the Holwan River and Murkuz, but at Murkuz there is good water from a well and a spring.

Murkuz is a rectangular fort of red brick about 50 feet square, with walls about 20 feet high, and a circular tower at the south-west corner about 10 feet higher. There is a small mud village of about 150 inhabitants under its walls on the east side. Hosh-Khoori is the name given to an old ruin with underground chambers, in which a few Kurds were living. I think this is identical with Haoush Kerek, described in Rich's "Kurdistan and Nineveh."

There was a trickle of water here from an elementary karez which came from the neighbouring hills.

Hosh-Khoori, or Haoush Kerek, to Chiah Surkh.—The Turco-Persian frontier is said to be about 1 mile north of Murkuz, but it has never been delimitated, and I believe the

Turks claim a portion further east. There is no doubt, however, that at the present time, and for many years past, the *de facto* or practical frontier has been along a line from a point about 1 mile north of Murkuz to about 1 mile south of Kala Sabzi.

From Haoush Kerek I went almost due north to avoid the spur on my right front, and then descended the valley to the village of Saiyud Ali, where we had to ford the Kuretu Su, about 2½ feet deep and 20 yards wide. Ramps on both banks had been made for the waggons by Mr. d'Arcy's employés, and the crossing was easy. After crossing the Kuretu Su I went north-east by east through hilly and undulating country, but along a track made for the waggons, until I reached Chiah Surkh, which is in the hills marked Daridelavan. Chiah Surkh is about half-way between Saiyud Ali and the southern end of Kuh Banu, or, as it is locally called, Bambu.

Here I found Mr. Reynolds (Mr. d'Arcy's agent) and his party encamped in tents on a small plateau at about ¾ of a mile from the petroleum well. This well was then about 600 feet deep. Though there had been some exhalations of gas, and the bailer had brought up indications of the proximity of it, no oil had yet been discovered. There are some petroleum wells at the bottom of the plateau, from the surface of which oil is taken by the natives. These wells are not borings, but merely amateur excavations, wells with unrevetted sides, about 20 feet deep and 15 feet wide, made by the local inhabitants. They contain water, and the oil occasionally bubbles up to the surface and floats on the top, when it is skimmed off and carried away. The supply thus obtained is insignificant. Mr. Reynolds' party in the cold season depend for their water supply on a small stream at the foot of the plateau on the north-east side, and about 200 feet below it. In the hot weather they will have to pump their water to the top of the plateau from a distance of about 2 miles. I understand that arrangements had been made for this, and I saw the pumping engine in position. The party was under canvas when I saw them, and the weather was cold, their altitude being about 2,000 feet above sea-level. They will require better protection from the sun than this during the summer, and I was told that arrangements would be made for hutting the party. Mr. Reynolds has employed a number of Persians and Kurds locally; the latter are chiefly employed as watchmen and messengers. They seemed to me to be very highly paid, and the payment is probably a species of blackmail for protection against robbery.

The neighbouring Kurds are a rough, unruly lot, and even their Chiefs—of whom Aziz Khan seemed to be the most important and influential—have little authority over them. The Persian Government has less. Mr. Reynolds seemed to me to manage them well enough, and he has been tactful in preventing local feuds among them from developing into anything more serious. Mr. Reynolds's party are practically at their mercy in the event of any serious disturbance, for I doubt whether the Governor of Kasr-i-Sherin could adequately protect them.

The country round Chiah Surkh is a large plateau about 5 miles by 4 miles, broken up by deep ravines with almost precipitous sides. There is abundance of grass, but very little wood in the neighbourhood. I walked round these hills, accompanied by one of the engineers and two Kurds, saw the well in the company of Mr. Reynolds, and watched several bailers emptied. The bailer is the cylindrical tube which brings up the dust and sediment excavated by the borer.

Chiah Surkh to Kasr-i-Sherin.—About 12 or 13 miles through easy, undulating, grassy country, Mr. Reynolds and I were able to canter most of the way, and only stopped at two or three little streams, which we forded. Carts could not travel by this road, and my caravan returned from Chiah Surkh to Khanakin viâ Hesh-Khoori and Murkuz, the same way as it came. The villagers on the road all seemed very friendly to Mr. Reynolds, and in nearly all cases some little girl would bring out a bowl of milk for his acceptance. There was little cultivation on the way, and we passed Aziz Khan's fort on our left—a square inclosure with thick mud walls. About a mile from Kasr-i-Sherin we passed the massive ruins of an old fire temple, an account of which will be found in Rich's "Kurdistan and Nineveh," and some mention of it also in Commander Felix Jones'* report of a journey with Sir Henry Rawlinson to this portion of Turkey and Persia.

At Kasr-i-Sherin I had an interview with the Governor, Samsim-ul-Mumalik, which was formal and uninteresting. From Kasr-i-Sherin I rejoined my caravan at Khanakin, and returned to Bagdad by the route by which I had come.

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* Printed at the Bombay Education Society's Press for Government in 1857.

Inclosure 4 in No. 38.

Notes by Acting Consul-General Newmarch of a Tour from Bagdad to Mandali and back in February–March 1903.

Bagdad to Aboo Aruj.—This route as far as Balad-Ruz is the route taken by the caravans of Mr. d'Arcy's employés. Mr. d'Arcy is a British subject who has obtained a valuable mining concession in Southern Persia.

Heavy machinery and waggons cross the Diyala River by a bridge of boats at about 11 miles south-east of Bagdad, where the Diyala joins the Tigris. In the dry season the Diyala can be forded at many places by foot passengers or mules, but for mule caravans and light carts the boat ferry at Aboo Aruj is more convenient. The distance from Bagdad to Aboo Aruj is about 14 miles in a north-easterly direction; the country is flat, but interspersed with mounds, the ruins of former buildings and of brick-kilns. These mounds are seldom more than 15 feet above the surrounding country, and have gently sloping sides. They are no real obstacle to the movement of men, horses, or even carts, but they afford cover from view or fire to a considerable distance in rear of them.

The first mounds of this kind are met with at a distance of about 3 to 4 miles from Bagdad, in a north-easterly direction; 3 or 4 miles further on a different kind of mound is encountered, the silted-up remains of old canals running generally from north by west to south by east. There are two or three such embankments running generally parallel to each other, and varying in height from 15 feet to 5 feet, and in breadth from 40 feet to 10 feet. There is generally a slight depression in the centre, the remains of the old canal beds, but not deep enough to hold water, except after heavy rain. These old canals are cut and crossed at several points by the traffic of the desert and by cattle, and at these points there is hardly any rise in the track. They would also provide good cover from view and fire, and might easily be converted into entrenchments, proof against ordinary field guns. They would be no obstacle to the advance over them of all arms, for the banks are gently sloping. For about the first 8 miles the soil is a light clay, resembling the "put" between Sibi and Jacobabad. As the river is approached the soil becomes sandy. In dry weather carts, mules, horses, and camels can move over this country in almost any direction with ease, but even a little rain proves a serious obstacle, for then the soil becomes first slippery and then sticky and quaggy.

After an inch of rain this country is difficult even for footmen to traverse, and after a heavier fall it would generally be impassable for at least twenty-four hours after the ground began to dry. In the hot or dry season even a slight wind raises clouds of dust, and this is especially the case when the wind is southerly. During January, February, and March there is generally an abundance of short green grass, and the country is covered with Arab tents and herds of sheep, goats, and camels, and rarely of kine.

The Diyala at the boat ferry has steep banks—in many places precipitous—and is about 60 yards wide. The depth varies according to the season, and varies considerably, from about 15 feet to 2 feet. The ferry consists of a light boat, of rectangular or punt shape, about 30 feet long by 10 feet wide; one end of it is open and nearly flush with the bank, and at this end embarkation and disembarkation take place. A slack hemp rope is stretched from bank to bank and moored to wooden pegs let into the banks. Along this rope the ferry boat is hauled by men inside the boat; two men suffice for this, unless the wind is unusually strong and directly up or down-stream, when more labour would be required. I think the boat could be used at all times—at least by Europeans.

I was overtaken by a high wind, sandstorm, and heavy rain while I was at Aboo Aruj, and during this period the men in charge of the boat declared it was impossible to cross, until I made them do it. The boat can carry eight horses at a time and a proportionate number of mules or other animals; the sides of the boat are only about 3 feet above the water, and if the animals are restive there is some danger of their jumping out of the boat, or putting their feet through the sides, which are lightly built of laths laced between timbers of about 4 to 6 inches in diameter, which form the ribs of the boat. The outside of the boat is covered with a kind of pitch or bitumen very commonly used in the neighbourhood, and is the only protection against leakage, but it appears to be sufficient. The boat is furnished with a long rudder built out on a framework of light timber. This rudder makes a powerful lever, and the boat is proportionately handy.

The current of the river varies, according to the season, from 4 miles an hour after a rise to an almost imperceptible flow during the dry season.

The banks of the river are steep even at the ferry, but it is not necessary to unload animals laden with ordinary weights. On the far, or left bank, there is, within 50 feet of the top, the remains of an old canal, which seems to have taken off from the Diyala at this point. This canal is, of course, silted up, but it is about 20 feet wide and about 10 feet high. I pitched my tents under the shelter of this bank as a protection against the strong wind then blowing from the south-east, but, nevertheless, two tents were seriously damaged and all were nearly blown away.

Abou Aruj is a little north (about 1 mile) of the ruins marked as "Safri" on most maps, but the Arabs in the neighbourhood seemed never to have heard of Safri.

Abou Aruj to Saniya.—A little way—about 100 yards—behind the canal bank under which I took shelter is "the old bed of the Diyala." This is shown on the map I have (South-west Asia, Sheet No. 56) as almost a straight line, but I found that it curved very often both north and south of Abou Aruj for a distance of at least 2 or 3 miles on either side. I doubt if this is correctly described on the map as "the old bed of the Diyala." I think it is more probably a continuation to the northward of the Nahrwan Canal. The local Arabs call it "The Nahrwan," and seemed quite astonished when I suggested that it was the old bed of the Diyala. It is about 60 yards wide from the top of one bank to the top of the other, and about 25 feet deep in the centre, with banks which are, in most places, gently sloping and a good deal broken. It is no obstacle to movement across it. In the rainy season water collects in a few depressions in it, but for the most part it is dry all the year round. From there my route was as nearly north-east as I could make it. The nature of the soil is a light sandy clay, but this side of the Diyala was much greener than the Bagdad side, and there was a little cultivation in depressions where rain water had collected and since dried up. This cultivation is spasmodic and not annual. I found one or two Arab encampments, which were always near water and remained there only so long as the water lasted. The country was featureless, flat, with a few low mounds (about 10 feet high) at intervals. These mounds are covered with bricks and potsherds, and are probably the ruins of brick villages or buildings. Other mounds there are which appear to be the remains of irrigation channels, but none of the mounds are any obstacle to movement. They provide a certain amount of cover, but they are inconsiderable.

During the winter season this portion of the desert is dotted with shallow lakes of water, and it is not possible to move in a straight line in any direction for more than 3 or 4 miles at a stretch. These lakes are merely collections of rain water in depressions of the ground. All that I saw were shallow, and did not exceed 3 feet in depth; but some of them were extensive, and one or two were at least a mile long and about half-a-mile broad. There are no reeds or grass in these lakes, and no cover of any kind on or near them. During the winter grass is abundant, but very short, and in the hot season the water and grass disappear, and the place is a burning desert of dust.

I camped near a few Arab tents where there was some water, and in the centre of some cultivation. All the fertile lands in this neighbourhood is the private property of the Sultan, and the place is known as "Saniya." The Arabs who work on these lands told me that they got two-fifths of the produce as the reward of their labour, and have to provide the seeds as well.

Saniya to Balad Ruz.—Balad Ruz is said to mean the city of rice, owing to the large amount of rice grown in the neighbourhood. For the first 12 miles of this march the country was exactly the same as before, but on nearing Balad Ruz it became lower and marshy.

During or soon after rain this country must be quite impassable, and I know that as the result of one storm, Mr. d'Arcy's caravans were detained in this neighbourhood for about ten days before they could move on.

At 2 or 3 miles from Balad Ruz a few irrigation channels are met with, but they are not a serious obstacle even to carts. The main canal from the north, however, known as the Balad Ruz Canal, is about 8 feet deep and 20 feet wide, and, when full, is a complete obstacle to all progress, except at the very few places where it is bridged. There are only three such places in the neighbourhood of Balad Ruz, and one of them (about 4 miles north of Balad Ruz) only consisted of two palm trees thrown across with some dust and mud spread over them. It sufficed, however, for the passage of my caravan, and only one mule out of twenty-eight animals fell into the water. The other bridges are one of brick and one of wood, in the village of Balad Ruz itself. I could not use them because the country on the other or east side of them had recently been flooded by the canal water. The brick bridge leads into, and is part of, a farm belonging to a Constantinople Greek named Zarifi. M. Zarifi's representative at Balad

Ruz is given certain local authority over the neighbouring Arabs, and to this extent represents Turkish authority at Balad Ruz. This brick bridge is about 10 feet wide, and strong enough for field artillery or ordinary carts. It leads into the farmyard, from which there is a road exit to the right and left on the opposite side of the bridge. The farm-house and buildings are of brick, and consist of four court-yards leading by narrow passages into one another.

Balad Ruz is thickly wooded, and consists largely of date gardens and fruit orchards. All these gardens and orchards are inclosed by mud walls about 18 inches thick and 10 feet high. Each inclosure has one or two narrow doors. The bazaar consists of one street, and is insignificant. The lanes between the gardens are about 12 feet wide, and very filthy; they are nearly all rectangular. The wooden bridge over the canal is in the centre of the village. It is a frail structure of wood, fit for loaded mules and, perhaps, camels, but hardly for anything heavier. It is about 4 feet wide, and is supported in the middle by a brick column.

A week's supplies for 300 men and 100 horses could be obtained here in the shape of rice, barley, wheat, firewood, salt and vegetables, sheep and goats, chickens and coffee. There are ordinarily about 100 kine here, 200 donkeys, 50 mules, and occasionally a few camels.

The main feature of Balad Ruz is the canal, and that (with the exception of stagnant rain-pools) is the only source of water supply. The canal is, however, perennial, except for a few days in the year, when a portion of it is emptied on to the neighbouring fields for the purpose deepening the channel or cleaning it of silt. It was in this condition when I was there.

In the winter, the approaches to Balad Ruz on all sides are generally marshy, but in the summer everything would be as dry as a brick, except in the canal itself and the adjoining gardens. The tops of the banks of the canal are about twenty feet above the surrounding country, and in the neighbourhood of the town there are several little irrigation channels, none of which, however, are serious obstacles.

There is not a single tree or bush between Bagdad and Mandali, except at Balad Ruz, and the country, with the exception of the few mounds and canals already noted, is nearly as flat as a table.

Balad Ruz to Kerkush.—Mr. d'Arcy's caravans cross the canal by the farm bridge, and then take a north-easterly direction to a place called Agha Bash, which is at the southern extremity of the Jabal Hamrin range of hills. The road between Balad Ruz and Agha Bash is perfectly flat and open, and there is no obstacle, except a few rain-pools in the winter and early spring, which involve very slight détours.

At Agha Bash there is no dwelling, not even an Arab tent, but there is a little saline water (a small spring) of inferior quality, which has a slightly purgative effect.

My route was to Kerkush, a rain-pool in the desert, between Balad Ruz and Mandali. After leaving Balad Ruz, I kept on the west side of the canal for about 4 miles, until I came to the palm-tree bridge already mentioned. I had to take this course because the land for about 3 miles to the east of Balad Ruz was marshy and impassable. Having crossed the canal, the country was perfectly featureless and flat till Kerkush was reached. The desert was quite green; there was abundance of short grass, and numerous herds of sheep and camels were grazing on it for the whole distance between Balad Ruz and Mandali. There were a few Arab encampments in all directions near the rain-pools, and this was the aspect of the country as far as the eye could see. In the hot season, these encampments and their herds all go elsewhere. On the canal, about 8 miles north of Balad Ruz, is a small thickly-wooded village, about one-third the size of Balad Ruz, and there is a similar village on the canal about 7 miles south of Balad Ruz. These villages are not shown on the map (South-west Asia, No. 56). Judging by the trees round them, they must be at least thirty years old.

Kerkush to Mandali (South-west Asia, No. 56) shows a branch of the Naffut River crossing the track between Balad Ruz and Mandali, but though I looked for it, I could not find this branch for a distance of 3 miles north of the track. There were, however, several marshy pools in that direction, and it may be that the stream has changed its condition since the map was made. The pool called Kerkush is about at the point where, on the map, this stream is shown as crossing the track. Kerkush seemed to be the biggest of all the rain-pools in the neighbourhood, and the water in it will probably last this year until nearly the end of March. After leaving Kerkush, the land rises very slightly up to the River Naffut. At the time of my crossing (end of February) the stream was about 25 yards wide, 2½ feet deep, with a current southwards of about one mile per hour. There had been slight rain three days before and heavy rain (about 1 inch) a week before. The banks are almost precipitous, though broken in several places, and at

the ford where I crossed, something like a ramp had been made by the passing traffic, which, however, is very small. It was not necessary to unload the mules in crossing, and the crossing was easy. The river is said to be named from the naphtha or petroleum springs near which it passes. These springs are about 21 miles north of Mandali, at the foot of a spur near which the river flows. At present, these springs are utterly neglected by the Turkish authorities, though I think they would amply pay for development, because the villagers of Mandali bring in the oil from there, as it rises to the surface of the water, and there is a rough-and-ready refinery in Mandali. The oil is used locally, but does not appear to be exported. I tasted the water of the Naffut River at the ford by which I crossed, and it appeared to have no special flavour or smell. The animals drank it readily. I was told, however, by a man who had long experience of this neighbourhood, that in hot weather, when the water gets scanty, it is not only unpleasantly flavoured with petroleum, but unwholesome to drink, causing diarrhœa. The banks of the Naffut are at present impassable for carts, but ramps could easily be made, for the soil is a soft sandy loam.

From the Naffut River to a certain mound called Imam Abdullah the country is dry on the north, but marshy and boggy on the south. It appeared to be quite impassable to the southward, as far as one could see with field-glasses, and in places there were large open sheets of water.

Imam Abdullah is a circular mound about 80 yards in diameter, rising abruptly about 100 ft. above the surrounding plain. It is shaped like a crater with one side broken down (to the north), and looked as if it had been a mud-volcano or perhaps a petroleum well; but I could find nothing volcanic in the neighbourhood. There are two or three smaller and similar mounds in the neighbourhood. These do not appear to be ruined buildings. The name of Imam Abdullah is probably taken from a tomb at the foot of the mound. There was a small Arab camp there and some scanty cultivation.

From here to Mandali the ground rises gradually, but presents no noticeable features. Within a mile of Mandali, cultivation begins and the town itself is thickly wooded. There are some watercourses shown on the map just to the east of Mandali, but I found no traces of them on the road, and they have probably disappeared.

Mandali is a village surrounded by trees in walled gardens. The trees and garden inclosures are of the same kind as at Balad Ruz, but far more extensive. The houses are largely built of mud or sun-dried bricks, and the enclosure walls are in nearly every case of mud. Mandali is on ground sloping to the southward, and is amply supplied with good water, which is brought by a canal taken off from the Gangir River at a distance of about 3 miles to the north-east of the town. At about a mile before it reaches the outskirts of the town this canal divides into three branches, of which one turns northwards without entering the town and is lost in the desert about 6 miles to the north by west of Mandali. This branch is almost parallel to the path from Kifri. The other two branches pass through the town and bifurcate in various directions on their way.

The supplies available at Mandali are of the same kind as those available at Balad Ruz, but about treble the quantity. There is ample water in the Gangir River all the year round. The stream is very rapid near Mandali—about 5 miles an hour—and the water was about 2½ feet deep and 60 feet wide in the end of February. The banks are gently shelving and the bottom is pebbly. At this time of the year the snow in Persia had not begun to melt, so that probably the current is much stronger, deeper, and wider in the hot season.

The population of Mandali is a mixture of Arabs, Turks, Persians, and Kurds, and they have an evil reputation for crimes of a violent kind. Nearly every man I saw outside the town was well armed, and nearly all had breech-loading rifles of the Martini-Henry pattern. The Turkish employés there are paid very irregularly, and when large arrears of pay are due to a man, he is given an order in writing to go and collect it from some neighbouring tribe, village, or person. The Kaimakam (Governor) himself told me that this was the way in which payments were generally made.

There was a detachment of about 100 cavalry stationed in the town when I was there, and it had been there for nine months, but its proper station was said to be Khanakin. There were, in addition, about fifty zaptiehs and 100 infantry. The Kaimakam told me that there were many redifs (reservists) in the town.

Inclosure 5 in No. 38.

Agreement between His Majesty the Shah and Mr. W. K. d'Arcy.

(Translated from the French.)

BETWEEN the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Shah of Persia, of the one part, and William Knox d'Arcy, of independent means, residing in London, at No. 42, Grosvenor Square (hereinafter called the concessionnaire), of the other part:

The following has by these presents been agreed on and arranged, viz.:—

Article 1. The Government of His Imperial Majesty the Shah grants to the concessionnaire by these presents a special and exclusive privilege to search for, obtain, exploit, develop, render suitable for trade, carry away, and sell natural gas, petroleum, asphalt, and ozokerite throughout the whole extent of the Persian Empire for a term of sixty years as from the date of these presents.

Art. 2. This privilege shall comprise the exclusive right of laying the pipe-lines necessary from the deposits where they may be found one or several of the said products up to the Persian Gulf, as also the necessary distributing branches. It shall also comprise the right of constructing and maintaining all and any wells, reservoirs, stations, and pump services, accumulation services, and distribution services, workshops, and other works of arrangement that may be necessary.

Art. 3. The Imperial Persian Government grants gratuitously to the concessionnaire all uncultivated lands belonging to the State which the concessionnaire's engineers may deem necessary for the construction of the whole or any part of the above-mentioned works. As for cultivated lands belonging to the State, the concessionnaire must purchase them at the fair and current price of the province.

The Government also grants to the concessionnaire the right of acquiring all and any other lands or buildings necessary for the said purpose, with the consent of the proprietors, on such conditions as may be arranged between him and them, without their being allowed to make demands of a nature to surcharge the prices ordinarily current for lands situate in their respective localities. Holy places, with all their dependencies, within a radius of 200 Persian arshines are formally excluded.

Art. 4. As three petroleum mines situate at Schouster Kassre-Chirine, in the Province of Kermanschahan, and Daleki, near Bouchir, are at present let to private persons, and produce an annual revenue of 2,000 tomans for the benefit of the Government, it has been agreed that the three aforesaid mines shall be comprised in the Deed of Concession, in conformity with Article 1, on condition that over and above the 16 per cent. mentioned in Article 10, the concessionnaire shall pay every year the fixed sum of 2,000 tomans to the Imperial Government.

Art. 5. The course of the pipe-lines shall be fixed by the concessionnaire and his engineers.

Art. 6. Notwithstanding what is above set forth, the privilege granted by these presents shall not extend to the Provinces of Azerbadjan, Ghilan, Mazendaran, Asdrabad, and Khorassan, but on the express condition that the Persian Imperial Government shall not grant to any other person the right of constructing a pipe-line to the southern rivers or on the south coast of Persia.

Art. 7. All lands granted by these presents to the concessionnaire, or that may be acquired by him in the manner provided for in Articles 3 and 4 of these presents, as also all products exported, shall be free of all imposts and taxes during the term of the present Concession. All material and apparatuses necessary for the exploration, working, and development of the pipe-lines shall enter Persia free of all taxes and custom-house duties.

Art. 8. The concessionnaire shall immediately send out to Persia, and at his own cost, one or several experts with a view to their exploring the region in which there exists, as he believes, the said products, and in the event of the report of the expert being, in the opinion of the concessionnaire, of a satisfactory nature, the latter shall immediately send to Persia, and at his own cost, all the technical staff necessary with the working plant and machinery required for boring and sinking wells and ascertaining the value of the property.

Art. 9. The Imperial Persian Government authorizes the concessionnaire to found one or several Companies for the working of the Concession.

The names "statuts" and capital of the said Companies shall be fixed by the concessionnaire, and the Directors shall be chosen by him on the express condition that

on the formation of each Company the concessionnaire shall give official notice of such formation to the Imperial Government through the medium of the Imperial Commissioner, and shall forward the "statuts," with information as to the places at which such Company is to operate. Such Company or Companies shall enjoy all the rights and privileges granted to the concessionnaire, but they must assume all his engagements and responsibilities.

Art. 10. It shall be stipulated in the Contract between the concessionnaire of the one part and the Company of the other that the latter is, within the term of one month as from the date of the formation of the first exploitation Company, to pay the Imperial Persian Government the sum of 20,000*l.* in cash and an additional sum of 20,000*l.* in paid-up shares of the first Company, founded by virtue of the foregoing Article. It shall also pay to the said Government annually a sum equal to 16 per cent. of the annual net profits of every Company or of all and any Companies that may be formed in accordance with the said Article.

Art. 11. The said Government shall be free to appoint an Imperial Commissioner, who shall be consulted by the concessionnaire and the Directors of the Company to be formed. He shall supply all and any useful information at his disposal, and he shall inform them of the best course to be adopted in the interest of the undertaking. He shall establish by agreement with the concessionnaire such supervision as he may deem expedient to safeguard the interests of the Imperial Government.

The aforesaid powers of the Imperial Commissioner shall be set forth in the "statuts" of the Companies to be created.

The concessionnaire shall pay the Commissioner thus appointed an annual sum of 1,000*l.* for his services as from the date of the formation of the first Company.

Art. 12. The workmen employed in the service of the Company shall be subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Shah, except the technical staff, such as the managers, engineers, borers, and foremen.

Art. 13. At any place in which it may be proved that the inhabitants of the country may now obtain petroleum for their own use, the Company must supply them gratuitously with the quantity of petroleum that they themselves got previously.

Such quantity shall be fixed according to their own declarations, subject to the supervision of the local authority.

Art. 14. The Imperial Government binds itself to take all and any necessary measures to secure the safety and the carrying out of the object of this Concession of the plant and of the apparatuses of which mention is made for the purposes of the undertaking of the Company, and to protect the representatives, agents, and servants of the Company. The Imperial Government having thus fulfilled its engagements, the concessionnaire and the Companies created by him shall not have power under any pretext whatever to claim damages from the Persian Government.

Art. 15. On the expiration of the term of the present Concession all materials, buildings, and apparatuses then used by the Company for the exploitation of its industry shall become the property of the said Government, and the Company shall have no right to any indemnity in this connection.

Art. 16. If within the term of two years as from the present date the concessionnaire shall not have established the first of the said Companies authorized by Article 9 of the present Agreement, the present Concession shall become null and void.

Art. 17. In the event of their arising between the parties to the present Concession any dispute or difference in respect of its interpretation or the rights or responsibilities of one or the other of the parties there from resulting, such dispute or difference shall be submitted to two Arbitrators at Tehran, one of whom shall be named by each of the parties, and to an Umpire, who shall be appointed by the Arbitrators before they proceed to arbitrate. The decision of the Arbitrators, or, in the event of the latter disagreeing, that of the Umpire shall be final.

Art. 18. This Act of Concession, made in duplicate, is written in the French language and translated into Persian with the same meaning.

But in the event of there being any dispute in relation to this meaning, the French text shall alone prevail.

(Signed) WILLIAM KNOX D'ARCY.
(By his Attorney, Alfred L. Marriott.)

Tehran, Sefer 1319 *H.* (*May* 28, 1901).

Inclosure 6 in No. 38.

Memorandum respecting the Turko-Persian Frontier near Kasr-i-Shirin and Mendali.

WITH special reference to the Turko-Persian frontier east of Bagdad, to which Major Newmarch alludes in his despatch of the 16th March, describing a journey in those districts, I should like to make the following remarks, from my personal experience there:—

In the description of Major Newmarch's route across the frontier near Murkuz he mentions "that the Turko-Persian frontier is said to be about 1 mile north of Murkuz, but it has never been delimitated, and I believe the Turks claim a portion further east.

"There is no doubt, however, that at the present time, and for many years past, the *de facto* or practical frontier has been along a line from a point 1 mile north of Murkuz to about 1 mile south of Kala Sabzi."

On crossing the frontier there in 1888 I passed through Murkuz, and have mentioned in my report that at 1¾ miles north of Murkuz "I pass a round masonry tower 30 feet high on a spur to the west." It marks the frontier, and a regular line of towers, 2 miles apart, runs 341° (north-west) towards the Diala River, and 197° (south-south-west) towards Khanikin. They are garrisoned by zaptiehs."

This is very much the same line as that described by Major Newmarch, but he makes no mention of the line of towers which were certainly clearly visible in 1888, but which may have since been destroyed. But if they still exist, it will go far to show that the Turks for several years past have practically accepted the frontier as traced out by them.

I have written privately to Major Newmarch to ask if he remembers seeing anything of the towers after passing Murkuz. The point is of some importance, as, if Mr. d'Arcy's petroleum borings turn out successful, it is very probable that the Turks will endeavour to claim a frontier farther east so as to include them.

In 1888 I crossed the frontier east of Mendali (also visited by Major Newmarch), and found it at the mouth of the defile of the Gunjir River, where it debouches into the plain, but marked only by a pile of loose stones at the western mouth of the defile, which might easily be moved (p. 6, vol. ii.).

It was 4½ miles east of Mendali. The frontier is not here delimited, but apparently follows the foot of the Persian hills, the plain country being regarded as Turkish, and the hills, directly they commence, being Persian.

This was the case here, and also near Zorbatiye, some distance farther south, where I recrossed into Turkey (p. 42, vol. ii.).

The Jebel Atish is a mountain east-south-east of Mendali, whence a stream flows which is charged with petroleum.

The guides stated that it was considered in Persia, but the people of Mendali were in the habit of taking oil from it. On the Persian side of the frontier the country is uninhabited, except in summer, when nomads of the Kalhur Kurds pasture their flocks in the upper part of the Gunjir Valley.

There are no villages, and the nearest sent of Persian Government appears to be Karind, some distance away over the mountains.

A detailed map of the Turko-Persian frontier districts from Mount Ararat to the Persian Gulf was made in 1853–54 by Russian and English officers, but no actual frontier was demarcated then or since.

The only map that shows the Turko-Persian frontier (approximately, of course) is Kiepert's "Carte Générale des Provinces Asiatiques de l'Empire Ottoman," 1884, scale $\frac{1}{1,000,000}$, but this is only roughly correct.

The exact site of Mr. d'Arcy's well or boring at Agha-bash is not traceable on the frontier map as the name is not given, but it may be near the Ab-i-Bakshan on that map.

It is impossible to say, from our present knowledge, how the frontier runs from Kala Sabzi to near Mendali, as there are a confused mass of low hills formed by the Jebel Hamrin joining the Persian hills, and unless some local landmarks, such as piles of stones, &c., were discovered, it is very difficult to say exactly where the frontier runs.

Kiepert's map shows the frontier as running from the mouth of the Ab-i-Zelezerd where it enters the plain direct towards Kala Sabzi, and this would include the Desht-i-Ab-i-Bakshan in Persian territory.

* "Reconnaissances in Mesopotamia, Kurdistan, &c.," vol. ii, p. 55. Simla, 1889.

The Intelligence Division Map of Persia, 1886, Sheet 1, shows a line coloured red and yellow giving the Zohab frontier as proposed by the mediating Commissioners in February 1852, but this does not appear to have been accepted or demarcated on the ground.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

Constantinople, May 6, 1903.

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 237.)
My Lord, *Pera, May* 5, 1903.

IN compliance with the request contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 105 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to inclose a copy of the certified translation of the Agreement under which the Syria-Ottoman Railway Company handed over the Haifa–Damascus Railway to the Ottoman Government.

The statements made by Mr. Hills, in his letter to the Prime Minister of the 9th ultimo, as to the supposed political objects of the Hejaz Railway, coincide with the rumours reported in Mr. Consul-General Drummond-Hay's despatch No. 15, Confidential, of the 7th February last, a copy of which was inclosed in my despatch No. 82 of the 15th of that month. It is not impossible that the Turkish Government may entertain some such idea, but the anticipations are so indefinite and remote, and the future situation so fraught with uncertainty, that apart from the difficulty experienced in collecting money for the construction the intention is doubtful, and is, moreover, one which it would be difficult to frustrate if it does exist.

Article 7 of the inclosed Agreement states that should the Turkish Government decide to intrust the construction of the Haifa–Damascus line to a foreign Company, Mr. Hills shall, the conditions being equal, have a right of preference. It adds, however, that should he avail himself of this right, the Imperial Government will be exclusively entitled to work the line. This stipulation limits Mr. Hills' preferential right to the construction of the railway, and renders it valueless as regards the control of the line in the future.

I have no information as to the alleged intention of the Turkish Government to concede the construction of the line in question to a German–Belgian Company, but were it so, Mr. Hills' prefereutial right might have its importance. I must, however, observe that Mr. Hills' concession was never confirmed by Imperial Iradé, and that it was this "heime" which made the settlement ultimately arrived at, and for which Mr. Hills has frequently expressed his gratitude, so difficult.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Agreement.

ENTRE les Soussignés : son Excellence le Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, d'une part ; et M. Allan Ramsay, haut fonctionnaire de la Régie Ottomane des Tabacs, agissant en qualité de fondé de pouvoirs de la Société Ottomane des Chemins de Fer de Syrie aux termes d'une procuration en due forme, déposée, d'autre part ;

Il a été convenu ce qui suit :

Article 1er. A la suite d'une décision sanctionnée par Iradé Impérial communiquée par Tezkéré Grand Viziriel en date du 26 Février, 1317, et No. 251, la Concession de la ligne du Chemin de Fer de St. Jean d'Acre à Damas, avec ses dépendances, ainsi que les travaux exécutés, le matériel, les matériaux et approvisionnements existants sur les lieux, est rétrocédée au Gouvernement Impérial, pour être rattachée à la ligne du Hedjaz.

Art. 2. Le prix de rachat de la Concession de la dite ligne avec ses dépendances ainsi que les travaux exécutés, le matériel, et les matériaux et approvisionnements, est

fixé à 155,000*l.*, payables la moitié au comptant, au plus tard, jusqu'au 1er (14) Octobre, 1902 (1318), et l'autre moitié par traite du Ministère des Finances délivrée à la date du 1er (14) Octobre, 1902 (1318), payable fin Août, 1903 (1319), sur les revenus des moutons et en cas d'insuffisance, sur les dîmes de la même année avec un intérêt de 5 pour cent l'an à partir du 1er (14) Octobre, 1902 (1318), jusqu'à extinction.

Art. 3. M. Ramsay, au nom de la Société et en vertu de ses pouvoirs, donne son consentement au rachat, par le Gouvernement Impérial de la Concession de la dite ligne avec le matériel, les matériaux et approvisionnements existants sur les lieux et s'engage, à l'échange de la présente Convention, à restituer au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, les Firmans Impériaux de la Concession, les Conventions et les Cahiers des Charges, et à remettre en même temps au dit Ministère un procès-verbal dûment légalisé de l'assemblée générale des actionnaires de la dite Société, contenant son adhésion au rachat de la Concession par le Gouvernement Impérial.

Art. 4. Mr. Ramsay s'engage à remettre, lors du paiement de la moitié du prix de rachat et de la remise de la Traite, la dite ligne, le matériel, les matériaux et les approvisionnements existants sur les lieux ainsi que les travaux déjà effectués, aux fonctionnaires qui seront désignés par la Haute Commission du Hedjaz.

Art. 5. Mr. Ramsay déclare au nom de la Société et en vertu de ses pouvoirs, que la Société dont il s'agit reste seule responsable des engagements contractés en vertu de l'Article 5 des Statuts, ainsi que des engagements que la Société aurait pris depuis sa création.

Les frais qui seront faits jusqu'à la remise de la dite ligne resteront à la charge de la Société.

Art. 6. Mr. Ramsay déclare et reconnaît que la Société n'a aucun droit à réclamer au Gouvernement Impérial une indemnité quelconque du chef de la suspension des travaux et autres, et s'engage à payer sur le premier versement à la Caisse du Ministère la somme de £T. 887 pour la période de la construction sur les frais du contrôle dus à la Caisse du Ministère, conformément à l'Article 5 de la Convention.

Art. 7. Au cas où le Gouvernement Impérial se déciderait à ne pas construire la ligne lui-même et à donner l'entreprise de la construction de la totalité de la ligne à un tiers, Mr. Hills, Président du Conseil d'Administration de la dite Société, aura, à conditions égales, un droit de préférence, et dans ce cas le droit d'exploitation appartiendra exclusivement au Gouvernement Impérial.

Art. 8. Le Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics donnera l'ordre nécessaire, à l'échange de la présente Convention, pour la restitution du dépôt de cautionnement de £T. 10,000 existant à la Banque Impériale Ottomane au nom de Mr. Hills pour la Concession de la dite ligne.

Fait en double et échangée à Constantinople, le 7 (20) Novembre, 1902 (date in Turkish).

Certifié conforme à l'original :
Le Directeur du Bureau de Traduction
du Ministère du Commerce et
des Travaux Publics,
(Signé) ZIHNI.
ALLAN RAMSAY.

No. 40.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 110.)
My Lord, *Berlin, May* 8, 1903.

YOUR Lordship's speech delivered in the House of Lords on the 5th instant has attracted considerable attention in the German press, and I have the honour to bring to your notice in particular an article in the "National Zeitung" entitled "England and the Persian Gulf."

This article begins by quoting your Lordship's declaration that Great Britain would "regard the establishment of a naval base or a fortified post in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests." This warning cannot be directed against Germany, who has no territorial ambitions on the Persian Gulf, and the statement that British "policy should be directed to protect and promote British trade in Persian waters" without excluding the legitimate trade of other Powers

is not only in accordance with British tradition, but from a German point of view satisfactory.

Note is then taken of the formulation of the axiom, as it is called, that political supremacy in the Persian Gulf is a vital interest of Great Britain. This the "National Zeitung" reviews in connection with the growth and strength of Russian influence in Persia. It regards your Lordship's language as a proof that a change is in process, and that the commercial negotiations at present taking place at Tehran will result in a manner favourable to our position in Persia.

In North Persia it is too late for us to try to weaken Russian supremacy. In the South it is otherwise. The question of South Persia is bound up with that of the railways in future to be built there. Whatever, from an objective point of view, may be the legality of the British claim on Persia to build such railways, one thing, the article considers, is certain in fact. Your Lordship has declared to the world our intention to build them. For this reason the question of the Bagdad Railway is all important for Great Britain. It will certainly be built, and it is for us to see that below Bagdad it shall be under British control. This has already been remarked in England. Hence the proposal which appeared in the "Times," to agree to the project on condition that the building of the line is begun at both ends at once. Further the needs not only of Indian defence but of Indian expansion, as recent utterances of Lord Curzon have limited, make the English lay particular value on the lands about the Persian Gulf. And in the same connection engineers of repute have lately made an appeal to British enterprise representing the irrigation of Mesopotamia as a proper field for the outlay of capital. Everything in fine points to the preponderance of British interests in the Persian Gulf, and your Lordship's speech laying emphasis on these will be well received.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 41.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 131.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, May 23, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 251 of the 12th instant, transmitting a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo relative to the cruel treatment to which, according to reliable information, the native Protestants of Kessab have been subjected by the Kaïmakam of Jissr Shogr.

I approve the representations which you made to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject. I should wish your Excellency to inform Tewfik Pasha that His Majesty's Government have received the reports of these acts of persecution with much regret, and that they hope that effective measures for inquiry and redress will be taken without delay.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 42.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 273.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 18, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting upon current events in his district, and especially upon the energetic action taken by the Vali in maintaining public security.

It was my duty to make such frequent and strong representations against the misdeeds of the late Vali, Faik Pasha (whose appointment I reported in my despatch No. 215, Confidential, of the 7th May of last year), and his intolerable oppression of Christians, that I have much pleasure in forwarding to your Lordship this favourable report of Nazim Pasha's strong and honest administration, the credit of whose appointment is due to the present Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 40*.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 18.)

(No. 251.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 12, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, reporting that, according to the statements of missionaries, the native Protestants at Kessab, in the Caza of Jissr-Shogr, are subjected to cruel persecution at the hands of the Kaïmakam.

I took an opportunity yesterday of speaking to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on this subject, and of leaving with his Excellency a précis of the despatch, pointing out that, if the statements made to Mr. Barnham were correct, the conduct of the local authorities had been most reprehensible, and entirely opposed to the principles of religious toleration laid down in the Hatti Hayoumon of the Ottoman Government.

His Excellency promised to cause inquiry to be made into the matter at once, and to send a Delegate from Constantinople to investigate it on the spot, should this course seem necessary in order to arrive at the truth.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 40*.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Aleppo, April 27, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that his Excellency the Vali left Aleppo on a tour of inspection on the 16th instant, proceeding in the first instance to Antioch to inquire into the facts concerning the disturbance at that place, detailed in my despatch No. 28 of the 6th instant.

I called upon his Excellency before his departure, and begged him, if possible, to visit the Caza of Jissr-Shogr, where I am led to believe, from the statements of the missionaries, that the native Protestants are subjected to cruel persecution at the hands of the Kaïmakam.

This matter was first brought to my notice on the 27th January last by the Rev. Mr. Sanders, a missionary of Aintab, then travelling in the district in question. He stated that the Protestants of Kessab, a large village in the mountains, having acted illegally in building their school-house without previously obtaining a permit, several of the community were imprisoned, but were told that they could be released if they paid the Kaïmakam 100 liras.

Mr. Sanders went to Aleppo, and, with the help of Ali Mohsin Pasha, obtained an order for their release, whereupon the Kaïmakam told them that he would make them suffer when he came to Kessab. He went to that village in December and arrested some eight or ten persons, but told them he would let them off on payment of 1 lira each. He caused the two Protestant Mukhtars to be trussed up in the fashion called "dongloz topou," being fastened neck and heels and then flogged with the "kurbadj." The men who had been arrested were taken from Kessab to Jissr-Shogr in the driving rain, and severely beaten on the way. The alleged cause of these arrests was their refusal to pay taxes, but Mr. Sanders declares that they owe nothing. In their distress these people found means to telegraph to Mr. Boyadjian, the Protestant Vekil in Constantinople, and I was requested by the missionaries to intervene.

Before doing so, however, I sought information from other quarters, and among others from Ali Mohsin Pasha, who, I had reason to believe, would not expose the cause of the Kaïmakam if he were in the wrong. He assured me that the matter was exaggerated. I then went to the Vali, who stated that, by order of the Porte, the Kaïmakam of Antioch had held an inquiry into the conduct of his colleague of Jissr-Shogr, and the result had shown that many of the statements of the Protestants were false and most of the others exaggerated. I should say that the attitude and language of the Vali was not very conciliatory. He is a most difficult man to approach on such a question, about which, moreover, I could only speak to him unofficially.

After that interview, I wrote to the missionaries to say that I could do nothing

further in the matter for the present, but that we must hope that, indirectly, my action would have a good effect.

On the 15th instant I received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Martin, of Antioch, of which the following is an abstract:—

"Fifteen days ago, under the command of Mulazim Shevket Bey, of Jissr-Shogr, accompanied by the Mudir of Urdu, between thirty and forty soldiers and zaptiehs came before dawn and surrounded certain houses in Kessab, demanding those who had telegraphed to Aleppo accusing the Kaïmakam and also calling for some others, besides these, and charged them all in the name of the Kaïmakam with having four months ago assaulted one of his soldiers. They first apprehended six persons, and, tying their hands behind their backs, sent them down to Urdu. They then ordered the Pastor of Urdu to produce his son who was in hiding, and when the old man asked if they had any warrant for his arrest, the Mulazim Shevket Bey beat him with the kurbadj, as well as his son's wife and another woman. They then robbed the house of everything they could find in the way of food for themselves and their animals, and, moreover, the Mulazim told the Pastor that if he did not quickly produce his son, he would take his wife and give her up to his soldiers. They then, under the kurbadj, compelled the old Pastor three times to send money to buy liquor for them. When the Pastor's son heard how his father had been treated, he came into Urdu and gave himself up. They were then locked up in the gaol at Urdu (the old Pastor included), having irons fastened on their joined thumbs, and every two persons chained together by chains on their legs. In this condition they were kept for two days at Urdu and then marched off to Jissr-Shogr. A day or two afterwards the Kaïmakam released the Pastor, telling him he was not wanted, and that he could go home, but no sooner had he reached his house in Kessab than the Mulazim, who had remained in Urdu, sent soldiers up to arrest him again, and he is now in the prison at Urdu, the remainder being imprisoned at Jissr-Shogr."

I received this letter from Dr. Martin the day before the Vali left for Antioch, and when I called upon his Excellency I read to him the most essential part of it. The Vali declared that the whole story was exaggerated, and I said that it was possible that there were exaggerations, but that there must be large substratum of truth in the matter, and that it was evident that the Kaïmakam had so acted as to justify the general belief that he was actuated by personal spite against these people. The Vali then admitted that the Kaïmakam was a drunkard, and added the very significant words, "He is like Mehemet Pasha of the Gendarmerie, who was here some time ago." At that moment some visitors came into the room, and addressing one of them, the Nazir of the Régie, the Vali asked if he knew the Kaïmakam of Jissr-Shogr, and, if so, what was his chief fault, to which the Nazir replied that he was only a drunkard.

I then found an opportunity to speak to the Vali more privately, and begged him to visit Jissr-Shogr after Antioch, and, if possible, restore tranquillity by the removal of the Kaïmakam and Shevket Bey, the Mulazim of the Gendarmerie, pointing out the extraordinary behaviour of the latter in having re-arrested the Pastor after he had been released by his superior officer, the Kaïmakam. The Vali promised to take the matter into his consideration when he arrived at Antioch.

I then asked him to tell me what was the accusation against these men, many of whom had been in prison nearly four months without trial. Those who were imprisoned in January were supposed to have been arrested for not having paid their taxes, and those recently arrested for having beaten a soldier or zaptieh, neither offence justifying such treatment. His Excellency would not tell me, but hinted at some grave offence, saying that the Proctor-General had advised him that some of the prisoners would be tried at Aleppo for Jinayet (on a criminal charge).

After leaving the Vali I sent a Dragoman to the Proctor-General to ask what was the charge against these men, but he declared that he did not know, and that the papers on the subject had not yet come from Jissr-Shogr. The Dragoman then saw Nedjib Bey, the son of the Vali, a young official who begins to exercise considerable influence here, who spoke vaguely about these people as political conspirators.

I then wrote to Dr. Martin, and told him that, as spiritual head of this community, he might very properly call upon the Vali during his visit at Antioch, and respectfully beg him to release the Pastor. Dr. Martin did so, but was not well received by the Vali, who appears to have lost his temper and railed against the interference of foreigners in things which do not concern them.

The Pastor has since been removed from the prison of Urdu to that of Jissr-Shogr.

I would here remark that the Caza of Jissr-Shogr is far removed from the beaten

track, and that the acts of the authorities are never criticized unless by the missionaries, who, from time to time, travel through the district. Of the latter, I have every reason to trust the judgment of Mr. Sanders, who wrote to me reporting the arrests at Kessab in January. He is a cool, level-headed man, with a great command of the Turkish language, and his services were invaluable in supplying information at the time of the massacres.

It seems to me that the Kaïmakam of Jissr-Shogr and his accomplices supposed that they could do as they pleased with an out-of-the-way mountain village like Kessab, and that nothing would be known about it, and now that they hear that these acts of persecution have been brought to my notice, they wish to trump up false and incriminating charges to make a show of justification for themselves. The worst of it is, that I fear the Vali has decided to support the Kaïmakam instead of punishing him. If it be true that a charge of sedition is to be brought against these people, it is unfortunate for them that during the early days of the Zeitoun insurrection, Kessab was a centre of Hunchag propaganda.

I will keep your Excellency informed of any fresh development of the question, but I venture to suggest whether it would be possible to obtain from the Minister of Justice orders for the speedy and fair trial of the prisoners, on whatever charge it may be intended to prosecute them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

Inclosure in No. 42.

Vice-Consul Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, May 4, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 8, and to a statement in the report inclosed with my despatch No. 7, regarding the attack by Ibrahim Pasha's Hamidieh on the Dugerli tribe, I have the honour to report, for your Excellency's information, as follows:—

After this affair, in which it is believed that seven Dugerli villages were utterly destroyed, officers of rank, accompanied by troops, were sent to the scene of disturbance from Aleppo, Urfa, and Mardin, to inquire into and report upon the circumstances of the case, the officer from Mardin being Ishak Pasha, Commandant of the Hamidieh of the Diarbekir vilayet. It is said, probably with truth, that the three officers, acting upon private instructions from Zekki Pasha, reported officially that the affair had been greatly exaggerated and that the Dugerli had suffered no harm whatever.

As an illustration of the steps which the Vali is taking to preserve order, the following two incidents may be of interest:—

1. About the 15th April an official and his secretary, accompanied by a single zaptieh, were sent to collect the sheep-tax at a Kurdish village called Kirghali, distant only four hours from Diarbekir; the three men were beaten by the villagers, and the zaptieh's rifle taken from him. The Vali, on hearing of the case, at once sent a Bimbashi and thirty mounted police to the village with orders to arrest the offenders; the order was promptly carried out, and twenty-five of the Kirghali men are now in prison at Diarbekir.

2. On the 27th April a Nestorian caravan of fifteen animals, travelling here from Aleppo, was attacked by a band of about twenty men at a place called Sheitan Deresi, some eight hours from Diarbekir, and lost all their animals, together with a sum of £T. 400 in gold, which was hidden in the pack-saddles. The two zaptiehs accompanying the caravan had their rifles taken, but eventually got them back; these men were from Severek, and are believed to have been in league with the robbers. News of this having reached the Vali the same evening, he at once dispatched a Bimbashi with thirty mounted men, and sent telegraphic orders to Severek, Chermuk, and Maden for about a hundred additional police to proceed at once to the scene of the robbery, so that next morning Hamid Bimbashi had a force of about 120 men assembled under his orders at the village of Karabaghche. He discovered that the band was under Hassan Bey, a notorious robber, a Circassian, and one of Ibrahim Pasha's men, and that they had gone in the direction of Karagechi's country, in order to put any one pursuing them off the scent. He also found out where the robbers were, and made arrangements to surround them, but his plan miscarried, owing, it is said, to one of the police officers, who is in Ibrahim Pasha's pay, having purposely sounded a bugle, which gave timely warning to the robbers, who managed to get away with the loss of three killed and two wounded.

One of the men killed was the son of Hassan Bey, mentioned above, and the two others were Hamidieh. All the stolen animals were recovered, except two killed in the fighting, and were brought into Diarbekir, together with two horses belonging to men who were killed. The £T. 400 were found intact, and were restored to the Nestorians personally by the Vali, who at the same time gave orders for the captured horses to be sold, and for two mules to be bought with the proceeds to replace the missing animals. The Vali was greatly dissatified at the escape of the majority of the robbers; the reason for their having been allowed to do so appears to be that the police, unaccustomed to such a novel state of things, did not believe that the Vali had really given orders that they should use their rifles, and, after having killed three men, were afraid of the possible consequences to themselves, and allowed the rest to ride off.

The robbers are said to be now at Veranshehr, Ibrahim Pasha's head-quarters.

Such prompt and energetic action in dealing with robbers has been unknown for years, and this affair is the absorbing topic of conversation in the bazaars.

On the 27th April a cypher telegram from Constantinople was received here asking for the special prayers of all Moslems for the State, which is in a situation of great difficulty, and accordingly on Friday last there was an unusually large attendance at the mosques.

Orders have just been received that all arrears of taxes of the last nineteen years are to be collected with the least possible delay, and the whole amount remitted to Constantinople, with the exception of one quarter of the sum collected for the eighteenth year, which may be retained for local purposes.

The Vali has withdrawn the long-existing prohibition of the issue of travelling "tezkerehs" to Christian merchants, and many of them are leaving Diarbekir this week for Aleppo, Constantinople, and other places.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON.

No. 43.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 291. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Pera, May 20, 1903.*

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Block, in a confidential conversation on the 18th instant, that the Russian Ambassador had been pressing him to obtain authorization from the Sultan for a "scientific expedition," consisting of some ten or twelve persons, to visit Van, Diarbekir, Mossul, and Bagdad, for the purpose of making archæological and geographical surveys, and to "study the country."

M. Zinoview said that his Government found difficulties in carrying out the project of a railway through Persia to Bushire, owing to the poorness of the country, to the sparseness of the population in the districts to be traversed, and he thought it might be found more suitable and advantageous also to the Porte that a line should be built through Turkish territory in connection with the Caucasus railways; the Russian Government, he added, would not be likely to require a kilometric guarantee.

Tewfik Pasha said that he gave no encouragement to M. Zinoview; he told him that the Sultan would never consent, and pointed out that the Germans had already got their Concession for the Bagdad Railway; that a scheme such as he indicated would probably rouse the opposition of England, and that the Sultan would be averse to raising so delicate a question with these two Powers.

In reply, M. Zinoview observed, "Comment donc, vous vous méfiez de nous?" and added that, as the expedition did not propose to start till June or July, there was still time to approach the Sultan.

It is difficult to gauge offhand the political importance of the Russian Ambassador's remarks, or to say whether they are to be regarded as a concrete proposition or merely as a tentative proposal, showing the compensation which Russia may require as a set-off to the Bagdad Railway Concession.

The intelligence is interesting, however, in so far as it indicates that the rumour of a Russian railway through Persia, abutting on the Persian Gulf in the neighbourhood of Bunder Abbas, is unfavourably regarded at St. Petersburgh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 44.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 139.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, May 28, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 273 of the 18th instant, containing a report from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir upon current events in his district.

I have read with satisfaction the accounts of the energetic action taken by the Vali, Nazim Pasha, in maintaining public security and of his strong and honest administration.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 1.)

(No. 296.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 23, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that an application has been addressed to the Minister of Public Works by a certain M. M. Hartmann for the concession of a railway in Western Asia Minor.

The proposed line is to start from Aivalik (opposite the Island of Mitylene) and to have its terminus at Adalia. It is to pass Balikesser, Simar, Terziler, Sandukli, and Isbarta, with branches to Ohai, Egerdir, and Buldur. The line is to be of normal gauge, and no kilometric guarantee is asked for. The application includes also the concession of two harbours, one at Aivalik and the other at Adalia, on conditions similar to those granted to the Anatolian Railway for the port of Haidar Pasha.

I understand that M. Hartmann is a German who was formerly employed as an engineer on the Anatolian Railway, and the presumption is that his present demand is merely put forward to block the extension of the Smyrna-Aidai Railway Company to Egerdir and Esparta.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 46.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 1.)

(No. 307.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 27, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, reporting on the difficulties which have attended the calling out of the Redifs in the district of Koniah.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Vice-Consul Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 24.)
Sir, *Adana, May 13, 1903.*

I AM informed that the calling out of the Redifs in the Koniah district and neighbouring parts has not been unattended with grave difficulties.

Many of the men called upon are said to have left their homes and to have deserted to the mountains, where they are now living on robbery and pillage on the Christians who venture outside their villages.

There are signs here locally of the prevailing poverty. Quite recently since my return I have heard of several cases of highway robbery on Christians. A general feeling of fear for the future is growing, and the Christians say that they will not venture out as usual to their summer residences. The police being unpaid, having tendered their resignations, are now committing many acts of injustice and cruelty in order to raise money to live. The Government Exchequer is dry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

No. 47.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 69. Commercial.)

Foreign Office, June 6, 1903.

Sir,

ALTHOUGH the discussion of the conditions on which this country might participate in the Bagdad Railway scheme has been abandoned for the present, it is quite possible that it may be resumed, and it would, I think, be useful that this Department should be furnished with a report on the general commercial situation in Asia Minor as affected by the nationality of the owners of the railways.

It might be convenient that the Report should be drawn up by Mr. Vice-Consul Waugh, under instructions from your Excellency, and that you should forward it to me with the comments of the Commercial Attaché to His Majesty's Embassy, and with any observations which you may wish to offer on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 48.

Extract from Letter of Dr. Schumacher, dated the 23rd May.—(Communicated by Mr. Hills, of Thames Ironworks Company, June 8, 1903.)

THE progress of work is considerable. In spite of the troubles in Macedonia, and of the absolute lack of money, the Government is, nevertheless, pushing the Haifa and Hejjaz Railway line with remarkable energy. They have now laid 15 kilom. of rails, and have at Haifa a stock of about 30 more kilom. of rails and sleepers, a huge mass of hydraulic cement, twenty-six large and some twenty small tip-waggons, freight cars for permanent way, and for Thursday next the "Levante Linie" has announced to their agent here that they should prepare for the lighterage of three new Munich (German) locomotives. The Sultan has ordered that the line must go to the Jordan before next fall. Here, permanently, 200 men are at work; at kilom. 20, about 100; at kilom. 31, 150; at Beisan, some 100; in all, 550 men daily, which are to be raised to 2,000 after the crops. Large quantities of ballast are being prepared. They follow our line after much consideration and suggested alterations to the Jordan, and from there up the Yarmuth Valley to Mzerib. At Mzerib a party is at work towards Haifa (150 men they say).

Still greater energy is displayed in Moab. I met Catholic Fathers, who had just returned from a scientific trip to Amman and Moab. They cannot sufficiently describe the wild energy displayed there. The rails are sometimes only laid on the bare soil, the wadies are crossed by bridging them with sleepers, and now they reached a point near Daban, near Kalat-el-Balka, east of the Dead Sea. The engineer in charge of the section, Maan—and this is the most important fact—is now studying the route from Maan to El Akabe. Daily wires arrive from Ezzet Pasha that the line must be complete in one year to Mzerib, and in another to "its southern destination;" the Sultan promises, threatens, decorates, punishes—does everything he can to further this railway. I had an interesting interview with a high German official last week, and these people are best informed. He fully shares what I last wrote, and says in Turkish circles it is no great secret that the Hejjaz line is merely to be built to "cross English intentions in Arabia." It is to go first to Akabeh to avoid, for strategical purposes, the Suez Canal, but also a line is to run from Maan into the heart of Arabia "to be to hand there." This gentleman expressed his surprise that the English ever gave up the Haifa scheme and so easily allowed the Turks to check them in Arabia.

No. 49.

Sir C. Greene to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 17.)

(No. 51. Commercial.)

Berne, June 15, 1903.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith an extract from the "Journal de Genève" of the 4th instant, in which it is stated, on the authority of a report sent from Constantinople to the "Gazette de Francfort," that "the Company for the construction of the Bagdad Railway is to be formed in the first half of the present month of June, with its head-quarters at Zurich." The report goes on to say that, "as is known, it is at present only contemplated to construct the first section of the railway, i.e., that between Konia and Eregli, the preliminary capital being stated at 3,000,000 marks (150,000*l.*)."

Since reading the above extract, I have endeavoured to ascertain what the facts might be in regard to the statement in question, and I have succeeded in gleaning the following particulars, for the accuracy of which I cannot, however, completely vouch, as no prospectus of the undertaking has as yet been issued, and some reticence is shown in affording the desired information.

It would appear, however, that the "Deutsche Bank," who are the promoters of the enterprise, probably deemed it prudent, owing to the fact that other than purely German capital was to be sought for the affair, not to select Germany as the home of the Company; and they accordingly fixed upon Zurich as a desirable head-quarters on account of its position in the centre of an adjoining neutral State, and, as such, less liable to be affected by future possible political complications.

They were further probably influenced by the consideration that they were likely to secure a more economical administration and a lower rate of taxation in that country than at home, not to mention the additional advantage that, according to Swiss law, only 20 per cent. of the whole capital required would have to be paid up in cash.

Financially, however, the great inducement to the selection of Zurich as the head-quarters of the Company consists in the fact that the formation and the whole management of the "Bank für Orientalische Eisenbahnen" is at Zurich in the hands of the "Schweiz. Kredit Anstalt" of that town; and as the latter bank occupies a high position in financial circles, the "Deutsche Bank" decided to invite the Swiss house to join them in launching the enterprise. It is stated that the "Schweiz. Bank Verein" of Bâle will also be invited to take part in forming a Syndicate of three.

As regards the Zurich "Schweiz. Kredit Anstalt," I am told that it professes to stand clear of all political connections, and thereby to be in a better position to defend its clients' interests in the East than any other institution; and, in proof of this, it is pointed out that, during the Turco-Greek war, when large military demands were made upon the Turkish resources, all the financial operations in connection with the war were carried out as smoothly as possible.

I am informed that the financial administration of the new Railway Company will be under the direction of M. Abegg-Arter, who is the President of both the above-mentioned concerns, viz., the "Schweiz. Kredit Anstalt" and the "Bank für Orient. Eisenbahnen."

The last-named Company's Board is composed of fifteen Directors, of whom seven are Germans who are also Directors of other Companies, five are Swiss, and the remaining three are Representatives of Austria, Turkey, and Belgium respectively.

The two permanent Delegates of the Board of Directors are M. Abegg-Arter, President, and Dr. Frey, Manager of the "Schweiz. Kredit Anstalt." The capital of the Company is 2,000,000*l.*, in 50,000 original shares of 40*l.* each, with 30 per cent. paid up.

(Confidential.)

I may add that, in a private letter, dated the 6th instant, which I received from Dr. Angst, His Majesty's Consul-General at Zurich, just before his recent departure for America, he wrote as follows in reply to my inquiries:—

"Notwithstanding the establishment of the head-quarters of the new Company in Switzerland, the real Managers will be the Germans all the same, and this you may point out to His Majesty's Government. The man at the head of the 'Bank für Orientalische Eisenbahnen,' Herr Abegg-Arter, of Zurich, is quite a German tool; he was one of the nominees for the Board of Directors of the original Bagdad Railway scheme. He is the personification of the old saying, 'Point d'argent, point de Suisse,' and would do anything for money. I will watch the thing carefully after my return from America."

I have, &c.

(Signed) CONYNGHAM GREENE.

Inclosure in No. 49.

Extract from the "Journal de Genève" of June 4, 1903.

LE CHEMIN DE FER DE BAGDAD.—On mande de Constantinople à la "Gazette de Francfort," que dans la première quinzaine de Juin aura lieu la constitution de la Société pour la construction de la ligne de Bagdad, avec siège à Zurich. Comme on le sait, il ne s'agit pour le moment que de la construction du premier tronçon Konieh–Eregli. Le capital de fondation serait de 3 millions.

* * * * * *

La question du Chemin de Fer de Bagdad n'est pas abandonnée, à la suite du refus de l'Angleterre d'y entrer pour n'être que le comparse et le bailleur de fonds de l'Allemagne. On vient même de nous apprendre que le siège social de la nouvelle ligne vient d'être fixé et que ce siège est Zurich, choix dont nous ne pouvons que féliciter nos confédérés, espérant qu'ils en tireront quelque profit. En tout cas, nous ne pouvons nous plaindre de l'habitude que l'on a prise depuis un quart de siècle de faire de notre République neutre le siège de toute sorte d'institutions cosmopolites d'intérêt général.

Il y a dans ce projet un vaste champ pour un grand marchandage; mais, comme personne n'a intérêt à rompre, il y a tout lieu de penser qu'il aboutira à une heureuse transaction. Nos petits-fils iront à Bagdad en train de plaisir; ils iront visiter Babylone et Ninive comme nous allons voir Rome ou Naples.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 20.)

(No. 348.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 16, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I received a telegram, dated the 8th instant, from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Kharput, stating that great uneasiness prevails amongst the Armenian population, that several professors of the American College had been arrested and their houses searched, and that the Kurds are being disarmed by the authorities.

This news was confirmed by a message sent on the 11th by M. du Vallon on behalf of the United States' Consul to my American Colleague, in which Mr. Norton states that the continued unrest in the district still excites great anxiety. He reports that the Moslem population is arming and threatening their Christian fellow subjects who are in a state of panic. The protestant Vekil, named Tenekejian, who is a Professor of the American College, was summarily arrested on the 7th, and has lost his reason in prison. Mr. Norton anticipated some relief of the situation when the Vali returned after an absence of a month, but meanwhile he and M. du Vallon were making urgent representations to the local authorities. I have caused the Grand Vizier to be informed of the nature of the reports I had received from Kharput, and in response to my representations urging that steps should be taken to secure the protection of the Christians, His Highness has given me assurances that stringent orders have been sent to the local authorities to that effect.

Having received reports of the existence of a similar anti-Christian feeling from His Majesty's Vice-Consul in Van, I took the opportunity of mentioning the matter to Ferid Pasha yesterday, and His Highness again assured me that all precautions were being taken both there and at Kharput, and that order would be maintained.

A copy of Captain Tyrrell's despatch is inclosed herewith for your Lordship's information.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing, I have received a telegram, dated yesterday, from M. du Vallon, stating that the situation, especially in the town of Kharput, has somewhat improved.

N. R. O'C.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Acting Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Van, June 1, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that rumours of an impending massacre of Christians were circulated this morning. The shops were closed, and the Armenians, who were on their way to the city to pursue their daily avocations, returned to the gardens, collecting in groups and discussing the news. I rode through the Armenian quarters, where I was accosted by several of these groups of frightened people, asking me if the news were true, and begging me to save them from another massacre. I told them there was no truth in the rumour, and advised them to set about their usual occupations, and not to frighten themselves, and make matters worse by collecting in crowds, which might make the Turks suspicious. Affairs had quieted down, and resumed their normal course by mid-day.

The three men who are said to have started the rumours have been taken by the police, and are now in prison. Two are Moslems, and one an Armenian. One of the former is a well-known bad character. It is to be hoped they will be dealt with in an exemplary fashion, for the chief object in starting these rumours is to bring on a massacre and general pillage. There are always persons who cherish this scheme, as I pointed out in my No. 3 of the 31st January, on the subject of the many rumours of massacres and revolutionists which circulate in this country from the Russian frontier to Moush.

What makes incidents like the above wear a graver aspect is that just now the latent suspicion and distrust of Christians, always present in the minds of the Mussulmans, have been aroused by reports of the events in Macedonia, and of the methods of the Bulgarian revolutionists there. Increased insolence and overbearingness towards the Christians have been very noticeable during the last week or two, and abuse and threats of a massacre are prevalent. So that, unlikely as it appears on the surface, a very small incident may be sufficient at any time to blow the spark into a conflagration. I have private suspicions that the military party, headed by the Ferik, are at the bottom of this morning's rumour, their hope being to embarrass the Vali, to show that affairs are in a worse state than they are, that he (the Vali) is incapable of dealing with the situation, and that a military régime is necessary. M. Toumanski, the Russian Vice-Consul, arrived here this morning from Russia, after an absence of six months.

I have, &c.
(Signed) E. TYRRELL,
Captain.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 20.)

(No. 355.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June 17, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, reporting that the situation in the Passin district is improving.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 13.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, June 4, 1903.*

I AM glad to be able to report that the improvement in the position throughout the Passin district, mentioned in my despatch No. 12 of the 29th ultimo, continues, and that the measures taken by the authorities to prevent disorders there seem, so far, to have met with complete success.

The only disquieting item of news comes from Erzingian, where two Kurds have recently been murdered. There is little doubt that the murderers were Armenians, the body of one of the victims having been found in the well of an Armenian house. What renders these crimes somewhat serious is that they are supposed to be the work of the Armenian Committees, the object being to cause reprisals on the part of the Kurds, resulting in general disturbances. The Vali, who paid me a long visit yesterday, informed me that this supposition was supported by certain documents found in the house. His Excellency, however, expressed to me his belief that there was little chance of the Committees succeeding in their schemes, as he was convinced that the Armenian population did not approve of them and would give them no assistance.

I told him that I was very glad to hear that this was his view; that I hoped that any agitators who came from abroad would be arrested and dealt with as severely as they deserved; and that I was confident that the authorities would do all in their power to prevent the Kurds from retaliating and so playing into the hands of the Committees.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 52.

Mr. Buchanan to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 22.)

(No. 145.)
Berlin, June 19, 1903.

My Lord,

A TELEGRAM of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" from Constantinople, which is reproduced in to-day's "North German Gazette," states that a complete understanding on the subject of the Bagdad Railway has been arrived at between M. Anboyneau, representing the French group, and the German financial Syndicate at Berlin. The Managing Board is, according to this telegram, to consist of three German and of three French Directors, and the share capital is to be distributed as follows: 40 per cent. to the German Syndicate, inclusive of the 10 per cent. allotted by the statutes to the Anatolian Railway, 40 per cent. to the French Syndicate, 10 per cent. to Turkey, and 10 per cent. to Austria and Switzerland.

The French negotiators, the telegram adds, are loud in their acknowledgments of the great loyalty of the German Syndicate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 29.)

(No. 364.)
Therapia, June 24, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to the last paragraph of my despatch No. 348 of the 16th instant, relative to the existence of anti-Christian feeling at Van, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further despatch from Vice-Consul Tyrrell containing an interesting Report on the situation of the Armenians in that vilayet.

I have recently upon several occasions drawn the attention of the Grand Vizier to the necessity of impressing upon the local authorities the extreme importance of repressing any tendency to fanaticism which might dangerously develop from one cause or another and render the position of the Christians precarious.

His Highness has answered me that he is alive to the danger and that he has sent instructions to the local authorities to neglect no precautions which they may consider advisable for the protection of the inhabitants and the tranquillity of the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 52*.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 138.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, June* 26, 1903.

HAVE you any information as to the report that a number of Kurds recently pillaged a convent near Erzeroum, killing several priests? The village of Benu was pillaged about the same time, and it is reported that the Turkish troops afforded no protection.

A question will be asked in the House of Commons on Monday as to whether His Majesty's Government have heard of these occurrences, and also as to what action in the matter we are prepared to take.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)

Van, June 5, 1903.

Sir,

ON the subject of the rumour of a massacre, which I reported in my No. 19 of the 1st instant, and of the anti-Christian feeling which has recently been manifested by Mussulmans, I have the honour to humbly set before your Excellency my views as to the situation here.

The action of a section of Mussulmans, which includes officials and private persons, tends, by the dissemination of false and alarming reports, towards bringing on a massacre. This section includes those who desire a massacre from motives of personal gain or from sentiments of fanaticism, and those who genuinely believe that a revolutionary movement, subversive of the existing order of things, is afoot, and requires to be promptly and severely dealt with.

I repeat that there is nothing here to justify the propagation of these rumours, which even reach far enough to appear as items of news in the European press.

I see a statement in the "Times" of the 14th May that "the Porte is informed that Armenian revolutionary bands have crossed the Persian frontier into the sanjag of Bayezid, and into the district of Sassun."

I doubt the existence of these bands, and I have never yet been able to get any authentic or reliable news of them, nor corroboration of a single one of the rumours as to their existence. At any rate, they do not come by way of Van, as they are reported to do.

In case a massacre should take place here, there can be only two reasons, or excuses, given for it:—

1. That the state of the country rendered repressive measures necessary.

2. That the Government was in no way responsible, but was simply unable to control local fanaticism on the Kurds.

The first excuse, which may have been justifiable before the events of 1895–96, is absolutely untenable now. I have before pointed out that, not only is the bulk of the Armenian population not actively revolutionary in sentiment, but that, if it were so, it is so helpless in its present unarmed condition, that it is absolutely powerless—so that measures tending to a massacre would be a piece of cruelty, perfectly unnecessary, and, even from an Oriental point of view, quite unjustifiable.

It may be said that, granted the bulk of the Armenian population desires simply to be left alone, and has no sympathy with an active revolutionary propaganda, yet the Armenian Committees in Europe are still working to bring on a massacre of their innocent fellow-countrymen, as a possible means of final emancipation from the Turkish yoke. I have reason to believe that the present efforts of the Revolutionary Committees in Europe are being directed to secure the extension of the reforms lately granted to Macedonia to all Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and that they have, for the time at least, abandoned a more forward policy.

As regards (ii), the Government is perfectly well able to control the Kurds and the extreme fanatics if they wish to do so. These dare not move without official encouragement. Even in 1896 the massacres in this vilayet were undoubtedly directly engineered by the Government.

I do not wish to be taken to imply that I regard a massacre here as probable—or even possible—so long as things continue as they are at present, and with the present Vali, Tahir Pasha, in power here. But I wish to say that the continuance of the present state of affairs here depends entirely on Constantinople—on the view and on the line of action taken by the Central Government.

In my No. 16 of the 12th May, paragraphs 19–21, I expressed my belief that officials and others are quietly given to understand what line of action will be agreeable to the Central Power. If any massacre, or other undesirable events, should happen here, I am convinced that it can only be with the connivance of the powers that be. I am also convinced that while the Vali (in whose general integrity I have great confidence) retains, as at present, full powers, he will not allow anything very untoward to happen; but, in a conversation I had with his son, the latter significantly said that his father could do nothing in the event of certain orders being received from Constantinople.

That there can be no reason or justification for such orders I have endeavoured to show; but the false reports from this part of the country may at last have their effect

in raising the apprehensions and suspicions of the Central Government to the pitch required for the issue of intimations in the sense desired by their informers.

Should this line be taken at Constantinople, it is more than probable that nothing could be done locally to prevent another sad occurrence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 54.

Question asked in the House of Commons, June 29, 1903.

Mr. Flynn.—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that a Convent near Erzeroum has recently been pillaged by Kurds who killed a number of priests, and the village of Beun also pillaged about the same time; also that the Turkish troops afforded no protection during this action of the Kurds; and what steps the Foreign Office are prepared to take in regard to these occurrences.

Answer.

His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople has received no report from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum of any outrages of this kind having occurred near that place. He is, however, making inquiries. The Porte denies that there is any foundation for the reports.

No. 55.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 170 A.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 4, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 364 of the 24th June relative to the existence of anti-Christian feeling at Van.

I approve the representations which you have made to the Grand Vizier as to the necessity of impressing on the local authorities the importance of repressing any tendency to fanaticism in those regions.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 373.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 30, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have received despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, dated from the 9th to the 18th instant, reporting incidents which point to increasing hostility between the Christian and Moslem population in that city and its neighbourhood.

During the first days of this month a disturbance occurred at Yabrud, a village about 45 miles north-east of Damascus, owing to a bell having been placed on a Jesuit school there. The building was attacked by the Moslem population, and the Kaïmakam, who was summoned from the chief town of the Kaza, could only pacify the mob by taking down the bell with his own hands. The Moslems proceeded to stone all the houses in the village inhabited by Christians, but order was restored on the arrival of 200 mounted troops, which were promptly dispatched to the spot by the Vali. There appears to have been no loss of life, but it is significant that the troops arrived only just in time to prevent the inhabitants of the neighbouring Moslem villages from combining in a looting expedition on the Christians in Yabrud.

On the 14th instant a Christian policeman was stabbed to death just outside one of

the principal gates of Damascus, while interfering in a street quarrel. His murderer appears to have been an Armenian, but, owing to his costume, was taken for a Moslem, and the Christian mob, enraged at the murder of their popular policeman, made a determined rush on the police who had arrested him, with a view to lynching the prisoner. While doing so they uttered loud imprecations against Islam, the Prophet and Moslems in general. In the course of the disturbance the Commandant of Gendarmerie and the Chief of Police were severely beaten, and Mr. Richards is assured that it was only by the great courage and presence of mind shown by the Vali, who appeared on the scene in person, that retaliation on the part of the Moslems was prevented. About sixty Christians have been arrested in consequence of this affair.

A minor incident, reported by Mr. Richards, is a violent assault by a policeman on a young Moslem, a British Indian subject, for having accompanied two Christian friends of his into the courtyard of the great Mosque, which eventually resulted, owing to the Consul's representations, in the dismissal of the policeman.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 377.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 1, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 105 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I received a telegram yesterday from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, stating that he believed the report of an attack upon the Armenian monastery at Derekeuy to be absolutely unfounded, but would make further inquiries.

Meanwhile I have heard indirectly that Mgr. Armanian, the Armenian Patriarch, gives an account of the occurrence, which differs slightly from that received from the Sublime Porte. His Beatitude states that the monastery in question, which is situated near the village of Karin (possibly the same as that described as "Beun" in your Lordship's telegram No. 138), was almost entirely in ruins, having been destroyed during the massacres in 1896, and was inhabited by one monk and his servants only. It was recently entered and ransacked by a party of Kurds, who carried off or destroyed all they could lay hands on, and also lifted a number of cattle and sheep. They did not injure the monk or his attendants, but in passing through the village of Karin they murdered the Mayor.

Mgr. Armanian added that he had received his mail from Erzeroum two days ago, and that it contained no mention of any other depredations or attacks upon Armenians.

I inclose copy of a statement of the occurrence based upon telegrams from the Vali of Erzeroum, which has been communicated to me unofficially by the Sublime Porte, and which agrees in the main with the account I received verbally, as reported to your Lordship in my telegram No. 105.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 57.

Statement communicated by Turkish Government respecting alleged Attack on Armenian Monastery.

LES renseignements suivants découlent des télégrammes adressés à la Sublime Porte par le Gouverneur-Général d'Erzeroum :

Quelques Arméniens, faisant partie du Comité Révolutionnaire, ayant égorgé deux Kurdes, la tribu à laquelle appartenaient les victimes, voulant s'en venger, se décidèrent à attaquer le Monastère de Dérékouy, où les révolutionnaires avaient trouvé refuge. Les autorités locales, ayant été prévenues à temps, dirigèrent sur les lieux des gendarmes et des agents de police pour préserver de toute attaque le susdit monastère. Entretemps, un Kurde ayant tué un Arménien du nom de Calouto, la gendarmerie se mit à sa poursuite pour l'arrêter, ainsi que ses acolites, qui se dirigeaient vers Dorsim.

Des ordres télégraphiques ont été lancés dans toutes les directions pour barrer le chemin à cette bande et en arrêter les membres. Le Mutessarif d'Erzindjan, à la suite d'ordres catégoriques, s'est rendu au Monastère de Dérékeuy, afin de rassurer les prêtres, calmer les esprits surexcités par les méfaits du Comité Révolutionnaire Arménien et empêcher tous faits pouvant porter atteinte à la tranquillité.

Le dernier télégramme du Gouverneur-Général d'Erzeroum assure d'une façon absolue que le calme règne dans ces parages, grâce aux mesures prévoyantes adoptées en temps opportun, et que les Arméniens se trouvant dans le Monastère de Dérékeuy, ainsi que dans les autres localités, jouissent d'une sécurité parfaite et que le monastère susvisé n'a été l'objet d'aucune attaque.

Constantinople, le 28 Juin, 1903.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received July* 13.)

(No. 380. Confidential.)
Therapia, July 4, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 106 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I learnt from M. Constans two days ago that, after careful examination of the Memorandum presented to him by M. Auboyneau, acting on behalf of the Ottoman Bank, M. Delcassé refused his consent to the agreement made between them and the Deutsche Bank in regard to the Bagdad Railway, and at the same time asked M. Constans for his opinion.

The French Ambassador, in replying, stated that the conditions did not seem to him to secure equal participation for his countrymen.

Forty per cent. of the capital was allotted to each financial group, but as the remaining 20 per cent. was distributed as to 10 per cent. to the Austrians, 5 per cent. to the Swiss, 2 per cent. to a Milan group of bankers, and 3 per cent. to a Constantinople group, all of whom were, he believed, more or less directly under the influence of the Deutsche Bank, the assurance of equal participation was illusory. Besides this, I understood M. Constans to say that a German should represent the Board of Directors on the Administrative Council. This Council was apparently to be composed of twenty-six members, ten each to the French and Germans, and the others to represent the smaller units who were affiliated to the Deutsche Bank, while the Ottoman Government were to have two Delegates.

M. Constans went on to tell me that at first M. Delcassé was inclined simply to notify his non-acceptance of the proposals and his refusal to allow a quotation on the Paris Bourse, but eventually it was decided, after laying the matter before the Council of Ministers, to state formally the demands of the French Government, and to leave the Germans to accept or refuse them as they pleased.

He had not yet heard the answer from Berlin, but he believed the German Embassy here gave it out that the French proposals were unacceptable, and that they would probably come to terms eventually with the English.

His Excellency added that he was a strong advocate of the scheme, provided that a British Syndicate also participated, and he was even desirous to come to an arrangement with the Germans alone, though not so strongly as with the participation of England. But he was now afraid that if such serious differences showed themselves even before the Company got to work, there would be little chance of the two groups working harmoniously later on, and he thought it likely, on the whole, that his Government would refuse their sanction and approval.

He was told that the German Embassy wished him to report to his Government that if his Government refused to participate it would have a baneful effect upon the good relations between the two countries which the German Government were so anxious to bring about, but he did not attach any importance to this report, which was, moreover, one that concerned his Government rather than the Embassy.

Whatever was the end of the negotiations, he thought the Germans would construct the Konia–Eregli section by themselves; but whether in this case the Turkish Unified Bonds would be given a quotation on the Paris Bourse, or his Government would agree to a modification of the customs dues, was another matter.

In connection with the general question of the Bagdad Railway, I beg to report to your Lordship that I have been indirectly informed by a gentleman who is in

close touch with the German Embassy, and gives me to understand that he speaks with authority, that it is considered at Berlin and in Government circles that M. Gwinner was too exacting in the terms and conditions which he sought to get accepted by the British Syndicate; that the Germans are now inclined to allow them to construct the Persian Gulf end of the line, provided they are allowed to retain the Haidar Pasha–Konia sections; and that it is hoped an understanding on this basis may be eventually brought about.

It is possible that some such views may be entertained by certain financiers at Berlin. If so, they are probably indicative of the swing of public opinion, and possibly due in part to the vexation and disappointment felt at the breakdown of the French negotiations.

While it is, perhaps, right that I should mention the matter to your Lordship more as gossip than otherwise, I do not think the proposal is by any means a definite one inspired by any responsible authority.

There are, perhaps, political wire-pullers who would be only too glad to launch in the press some story of fresh negotiations between British and German financiers which would considerately appear about the time of President Loubet's visit to England.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received July* 13.)

(No. 387.)
Constantinople, July 8, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 378 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting further on the recent riot in the Christian quarter of that town, which appears to have been to some extent attributable to the encouragement of the Dragoman of the Russian Consulate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR

Inclosure in No. 59.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 56.)
Damascus, June 22, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to my previous despatch No. 55 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I saw the Vali on the 19th instant, and had a conversation with him on the subject of the riot in the Bab Zûma quarter. Nâzim Pasha assured me that the report which I had heard (and reported to your Excellency in the despatch under reference), to the effect that the murderer of the policeman is an Armenian of Zeitoun, is incorrect; the man is an orthodox Greek, of Aleppo. His Excellency admitted that my version as to the man's origin had been very generally circulated, but he was in a position to assure me that it was not founded on fact. Under ordinary circumstances, no importance whatever would be attached to so trivial a detail, were it not for the fact that what may almost be termed a controversy has been raging all the week around this very point, viz., the religion and nationality of the murderer now in prison. Even now persons are to be found, generally Greeks, who assert that he is a Moslem, and not only so, but that he is a nephew of Husrav Pasha, the Commandant of Gendarmerie!

The Vali went on to inform me that he was convinced that the outrageously provocative behaviour of the Greeks on the evening in question was largely due to the encouragement they had received for some time past from Yusuf Effendi Sebá, the Dragoman of the Russian Consulate, who, acting under his chief's instructions, and more especially as the tool of the Palestine Society, never neglected an opportunity of inculcating veneration for and submission to the will of Russia and the Czar to the neglect of duty to the Sultan and his Government. On the very afternoon on which the riot took place Yusuf Effendi had, the Vali informed me, presided at a dinner given by

him in a garden on the outskirts of the city to the members of some semi-philanthropic, semi-patriotic Society (its nature was not quite clearly indicated), of which he is the chairman. Speeches had been made, and the usual toasts had been proposed and drunk to the Czar and the Palestine Society, and ultimately the guests had departed very satisfied with themselves, and little disposed to brook interference on the part of the constituted authorities. The Vali maintains that many of these men were foremost among the rioters, and the fact that some of the latter were heard to swear "by the life of Yussuf Sebá"—using the expression as a sort of war cry or *mot d'ordre*—seems to give an air of probability to the truth of this statement.

His Excellency went on to inform me that he had just written to the Greek Patriarch to expostulate with him for his unwillingness or inability to keep his flock in order, pointing out to him that their lawlessness was the inevitable outcome of the encouragement they had received for years past, with his (the Patriarch's) consent and connivance, from foreign Agents and their instruments and a foreign politico-religious Association, of which the teaching and general tendency were subversive of discipline and loyalty to the Sovereign. This letter the Vali then proceeded to read to me himself, and it certainly was couched in terms of grave remonstrance and rebuke. To give it additional weight and importance, Nazim Pasha informed me that he was sending copies to the Palace, the Porte, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Justice.

The Vali's complaint is undeniably well founded, but whether he has shown tact at this particular juncture in thus openly showing his hand to the Patriarch and those behind him is quite a different matter. Moreover, the matter assumes an almost comic aspect when it is remembered that if there is one man in this city who, for years past, has given tacit, if not open, encouragement to Patriarchal intrigues, Russian Consular interference with the Greek schools, the underground machinations of the Palestine Society, and the impudent assumption of superiority of Yussuf Effendi Sebá, it is Nazim Pasha himself!

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have been informed that the Patriarch has replied to the Vali's letter, the truth of the statements contained in which he positively denies. On the contrary, he maintains that the Sultan has no more loyal subjects than the members of the Orthodox community in Damascus, &c.

It would be interesting to know whether the Vali's sudden *volte-face* as regards his sentiments towards the Russian Consulate, the Palestine Society, and Yussuf Effendi Sebá is the outcome of instructions, or perhaps only a hint, received from the highest quarter, or whether his feelings have gradually been changing in this respect, and the Bab Zuma incident was merely the proverbial straw which caused things to come to a head. Nazim Pasha is astute, but he is also very impulsive, and he may have allowed himself to be carried away by a wave of passion.

I hear that my Russian colleague intends to support his Dragonian through thick and thin.

W. S. R.

No. 60.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received July 20.*)

(No. 394.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 13, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 348 and 364 of the 16th and 24th ultimo, respectively, on the subject of the recent manifestation of anti-Christian feeling at Kharput, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Acting Vice-Consul H. du Vallon, giving an account of the condition of affairs as he found them on his arrival at the beginning of last month.

In conjunction with the United States' Minister I made earnest representations to the Grand Vizier with a view to precautionary measures being taken for the protection of the Christians, and I assured myself that proper instructions to that end were sent to the local authorities. I am happy to say that the satisfactory action of the Porte has restored tranquillity and removed public anxiety to a great extent.

I should add that the Turkish press announces the recall of the Vali of Kharput, and the appointment of Fuad Bey, formerly Under-Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior, to succeed him, and I hope the news may be true, as a change is desirable.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 60.

Acting Vice-Consul du Vallon to Acting Consul Humpson.

Sir, *Mamouret-ul-Aziz, June 13, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that on my arrival in this vilayet on the 3rd June I found it in a state of considerable unrest, all the villages in the plain round Mezreh where Christians live, were in an unusual state of fear, while the Christians of Kharput were in a condition that soon bordered on a panic.

One Semerdji Artin, of Arabkir, had been arrested before my arrival; in his house rifles had been found and two Circassian suits of clothes; he was severely beaten by the police, and his wife was beaten in the same way, though she had but lately given birth to a child.

Following close upon this, Instructor Hovannes Haroutinian, of the Gregorian Armenian School at Kharput; Instructor Kegham, of the "Pères Capuchins" School; Fermanian Hadji Hagop, and Teneked jian Nigoghos Effendi, Professor of the American College, and Protestant Vekil, were also arrested.

Moslems openly threatened Christians with a general massacre. At first a few Kurds were disarmed by the authorities, but soon it became evident that the Moslems were buying all the weapons they could get. They pressed Christian debtors to pay what they owed; they retracted work that they had ordered; and some shops worked day and night at the manufacture of axes and knives.

The Vali was away on a tour of inspection; his substitute, the Ferik Emin Pasha, seemed quite indifferent to or ignorant of the state of affairs. At Kharput there was no one to keep order, the Kaïmakam being absent, and the Mal Mudiri Riza Effendi, an open enemy of Professor Teneked jian, acting in his place.

The arrest of Professor Teneked jian, who was denounced by Semerdji Artin, under torture, it is said, caused the utmost consternation. He is a man well known for his loyalty to the Turkish Government and his honest character, respected alike by Christians and Moslems. His house was searched, but nothing suspicious was discovered.

On the 8th instant I informed the Embassy by telegram of the state of affairs.

Several apparently reliable persons asserted that Professor Teneked jian was heard by them to scream as though in torture.

The United States' Consul, Dr. Norton, and I determined to see the Ferik. We urged the necessity of taking some precautionary measures, and pointed out the very dangerous state of excitement existing among the Moslems. The Ferik ridiculed the idea of the possibility of anything unusual being the case. We insisted on seeing Professor Teneked jian at once, to which he consented unwillingly. We found the prisoner in a state of temporary aberration.

Dr. Norton obtained leave to send the American doctor to examine the prisoner, in company with the Turkish military doctor. He reported a state of nervousness, that, without special care, might lead to complete insanity. The authorities desired the American doctor to sign a declaration that no special care was necessary. Needless to say, he refused.

The United States' Consul, Dr. Norton, determined, with me, to interview the Vali on his return, and obtain the prisoner's temporary release, but his Excellency is ill and can see no one.

Meanwhile the panic has somewhat quieted down.

A Turkish official of some importance in this vilayet asserts that in the absence of the Vali, the Commandant, Moustapha Pasha, a man well known for his fanatical zeal during the massacres of 1895, the Mektoubji of Vilayet, Sabri Effendi, the Chief Inspector of the Vilayet, Moustapha Effendi, the Commissaire of Kharput, Hamdi Effendi, conspired to excite the Moslems to a massacre, in order to bring the Vali into discredit and to serve their own private ends. The Chief Commissaire seems to have been dragged in against his will, also Moustapha Pasha has been round to the villages conciliating the Aghas, presumably for the purpose of getting their united support in the proposed massacre.

This assertion is credited, and is at least probably true. The greatest apprehension was felt by the American missionaries.

Now, however, a little confidence has been restored in Kharput and Mezreh, no doubt owing to the Vali's return, but in the villages the Christians seem to think their days are numbered.

It is unnecessary to point out the inhumanity of the treatment of Professor Tenekedjian. As far as physical comforts are concerned, he is well looked after, but though the Chief Commissaire said he had been informed of the prisoner's condition it is doubtful whether any doctor would have seen him had not Dr. Norton insisted upon a medical visit.

The authorities assert that a plot has been discovered among the Armenians, but, so far, little has been found to compromise any of the prisoners.

I am, &c.
(Signed) H. C. DE J. DU VALLON.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 401.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 15, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 291 of the 20th May, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a Memorandum from Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, recording a conversation which he recently had with Zekki Pasha, Grand Mastery of Artillery, respecting the proposed survey for a Russian railway from Erivan to the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 61.

Memorandum.

I SAW Zekki Pasha on Saturday at his house, and he told me in confidence (what your Excellency already knows) of the proposed Russian survey party for a railway from Erivan through Bitlis, Mosul, and Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, the line to follow the route along the left bank of the Tigris and not the proposed trace along the right bank suggested for the German Bagdad Railway.

He enlarged on the danger such a line would have to our interests in the Persian Gulf. He mentioned that the survey party had not yet started, and apparently they had not yet obtained leave to travel.

He went into the question of the Bagdad Railway with me at great length, and thought it very foolish that England had withdrawn from the scheme. At best even if we obtained the right of building a line up the Tigris Valley to Bagdad or Mosul we should gain no right of sovereignty, and the policing, &c., of the line would still remain in Turkish hands, and therefore he did not see what advantage we should gain from it.

I explained that the commercial value of the country would be greatly increased by the railway, and that the Turkish Empire would benefit by the improvement of trade, but somehow this idea did not seem to appeal to him at all.

He argued that if England remained alone in any concession she might obtain there, that she would have to cope single-handed with Russia, and in such a struggle she could hope to gain no advantage from her paramount sea power in inland countries such as the Tigris Valley. If, however, we had chosen to associate ourselves with France and Germany, we should have had interests in common with them, and could make it an international question against Russia instead of having to deal with it single-handed.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel, Military Attaché.*

Constantinople, July 6, 1903.

No. 62.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 27.)

(No. 411.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 21, 1903.*

I RECEIVED information a few days ago from a reliable source, stating that the Convent of Surp Agop, not far from Erzingian, had been pillaged by a party of lawless Kurds from the Dersim district, and that the Armenian inhabitants of three villages in Sasun had abandoned their homes and fled to the mountains, in fear of a similar attack.

In speaking to the Grand Vizier on the subject yesterday, and drawing his attention to the necessity of stringent measures against the Kurds, his Highness informed me that he had taken prompt measures to protect the inhabitants and to punish the guilty parties. A military force had been hurried to the spot, and the Vali had been instructed to do all in his power to reassure the inhabitants.

The Mutessarif of Dersim had been replaced by a more capable official, and the Vali of Kharput, to whose feeble state of health this and other similar incidents of recent date were probably due, had been superseded by a more active and energetic official. It appeared, however, that the villagers had not deserted their homes so much from fear of the Kurds as from the menaces and threats of a revolutionary band who had lately crossed the frontier, and were now being hunted down by the troops and police.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 63.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 27.)

(No. 418. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 22, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that your Lordship's despatch No. 138, Confidential, of the 3rd instant, was delivered to me by Captain H. Smyth, on his arrival on the 11th instant, and that I have since had several interviews with him on the subject of his proposed journey to the country which the Bagdad railway is to traverse.

I have taken the necessary official steps to obtain facilities for him, and I have instructed His Majesty's Consular officers, whose districts he will pass through, to afford him all possible assistance.

Putting aside the military aspects of the question, it is evident that with the means at his disposal, it will be impossible for Captain Smyth to undertake a detailed investigation into such questions as those connected with mining-irrigation and such like. With a view, however, to furnishing him during his stay in Constantinople with information on the commercial aspect of his mission, I gave him access to the Report of the German Railway Commission and other papers connected with the Bagdad railway scheme, and I summoned Mr. Weakley and Mr. Waugh to be present at an interview I had with him on the 15th instant. I subsequently drew his attention in a written Memorandum to the points which I considered deserved his special attention. The most important of these points are:—The general question of the Bagdad railway becoming a great trade route between east and west; the population, actual and prospective, in the districts concerned, and how it would be affected by the railway; the nature of the soil and its productiveness, as affected by the water supply, rainfall, &c.; and the effect on the railway of maritime access from Smyrna or the gulf of Alexandretta, as compared with its position if the sole western sea terminus were Haidar Pasha.

With regard to the section between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, I suggested his reporting whether the railway would increase our trade area inland from the Persian Gulf; what would be the effect of competition between the railway and river navigation from Basra to Bagdad; the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various possible termini on the Shatt-el-Arab or the Persian Gulf; the actual percentage of British trade between Basra and Bagdad, and how it would be affected

by the railway; what special advantages would accrue to British trade if the Bagdad-Persian Gulf section were directly under the control of a British Company; and finally, what effect the railway would have upon the transit trade through Turkish territory to and from Persia.

I ventured to detain Captain Smyth here for a week, in order to give him time to study the German Commissions Report and other papers. I was also anxious to ascertain whether there was a technical report drawn up by the Commission, and if so, to furnish him with a copy, but as I find it difficult to obtain information in this matter, I shall not delay his departure if I cannot get the Report within a few days.

I have, &c.
(Signed) *N. R. O'CONOR.*

No. 64.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 204.)
Foreign Office, July 28, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 394 of the 13th instant, inclosing a report from Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Du Vallon relative to the recent manifestation of anti-Christian feeling at Kharput.

The action which your Excellency has taken in making earnest representations to the Grand Vizier, with a view to the adoption of precautionary measures for the protection of the Christians, and in assuring yourself that proper instructions to that end had been sent to the local authorities, is entirely approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 65.

Sir C. Greene to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 29.)

(No. 63. Commercial. Confidential.)
Berne, July 27, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 51, Commercial, of the 15th ultimo, on the subject of the proposed Bagdad Railway Company, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a Confidential Report which I have received from Mr. Falck, His Majesty's Consul at Lucerne—who is also, as your Lordship is aware, a banker—which appears to me to corroborate in general the information which I have already forwarded to your Lordship.

Mr. Falck has, however, ascertained that this affair is still a long way from being settled, and that there would appear to be some objection on the part of the French supporters of the scheme to the participation of Swiss capital in the undertaking. Mr. Falck is of the opinion that politics, and not money, are for the moment the main factors in the situation; and he further expresses his conviction that, in the event of Swiss capital being seriously interested in the venture, it will be M. Abegg-Arter, the President of the "Schweizerische Kredit Anstalt," who will direct the whole affair.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CONYNGHAM GREENE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 65.

Report by Consul Falck.

LES enquêtes confidentielles faites par mes confrères de Bâle et Zurich confirment très positivement la justesse de mes impressions concernant le Chemin de Fer à Bagdad. On parlait non seulement d'une participation dans cette affaire, mais de former une Société nouvelle, domiciliée à Zurich, et constituée d'après le type de la Société des

Chemins de Fer Orientaux, que la Société de Crédit Suisse a créée et contrôle encore. Il ne s'agissait pas d'une Société pour la construction seulement, mais aussi pour l'exploitation des lignes, qui feront l'objet de l'Iradé de Décembre 1900 en faveur de la Société des Chemins de Fer d'Anatolie.

Il résulte, cependant, des dernières nouvelles obtenues par les journaux, que cette affaire est encore loin d'être en règle, puisque la repartition du capital social aux financiers des différentes nations forme encore l'objet de pourparlers entre les groupes Allemand et Français, et que ce dernier conteste à la Suisse la participation proposée par le premier. Il est évident que la politique joue le rôle important dans cette création, et que les hommes d'affaire n'y sont encore que pour très peu de chose. Dans tous les cas, me dit-on, l'affaire ne pourra être lancée qu'après la grande opération de la conversion de la Dette Ottomane, qui rencontre encore bien de difficultés.

C'est donc à Paris et à Berlin que la chose serait à surveiller; je ne serais pas étonné non plus d'apprendre que Londres soit rentrée dans la chose; et si jamais la Suisse avait à s'y intéresser sérieusement, ce ne serait que M. Abegg-Arter, Président de la Société de Crédit Suisse, qui dirigerait tout, et duquel M. Angst pourrait indirectement s'approcher pour être renseigné.

Voici un exemplaire de la "Nouvelle Gazette de Zurich," No. 200, du 21 courant, édition du matin; elle contient un article que vous lirez avec intérêt. Je voulais l'envoyer de suite, mais c'était précisément hier, ou avant-hier, que l'occasion de voir des personnes bien informées devait se présenter.

(Signé) LOUIS FALCK.

Lucerne, le 24 Juillet, 1903.

Inclosure 2 in No. 65.

Extract from the "Neue Züricher Zeitung" of July 21, 1903.

(Translation.)

AFTER the British financial groups had notified their withdrawal from the Bagdad enterprise, the German parties interested turned (in accordance with the original plan) to France, in order that French capital might participate in the construction and exploitation of the railway. According to the "Deutsche Warte," M. Delcassé, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, assumed at first an unfavourable attitude, on the ground that the distribution of the several shares in the line constituted a preferential treatment of the German element. The German and French shares in the undertaking were to amount each to 40 per cent.; therefore, as a matter of fact, they were to be equal, while 10 per cent. were to be assigned to the Turkish Government and the Swiss banking houses respectively. The French objection was directed principally against the engagement of Swiss financial houses, these being regarded as under German influence. Similarly, it is thought that the Turkish Government would take the part of the German participators where questions of principle were concerned. At present the negotiations are still proceeding, and it is not impossible that the French Government may give her assent to the plan submitted to her, subject to the modification that the share which was to have been allotted to Switzerland shall be taken over by financiers of other nationalities.

No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 420.)
Therapia, July 27, 1903.

My Lord,

MY attention has been called to a pamphlet on the Bagdad Railway by Dr. Paul Rohrbach, and as it contains much that is of interest in the general consideration of the question, as well as an excellent map of the districts traversed, I have the honour to transmit three copies herewith, in case it should not have already been brought to your Lordship's notice.

This pamphlet, together with other publications in the "Preussische Jahrbücher," which are partly quoted in it, are the result of the author's journeys in Asiatic Turkey in 1899 and 1900–1901. Although the pamphlet was published more than eighteen months ago, very few of the statements in it are affected by what has since taken place,

and it may still be accepted as an exposition of the point of view from which the Germans regard the scheme.

I also inclose a short summary in English, giving the salient points dealt with in the pamphlet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Summary of a Pamphlet by Dr. Paul Rohrbach respecting the Bagdad Railway, dated January 18, 1902.

AFTER a short introduction, the pamphlet is divided into three main sections, viz.:

1. Political considerations.
2. The economic basis of the scheme.
3. The route and the districts traversed by the Bagdad Railway.

I. *Political Considerations.*

If there were any probability that the whole of the Turkish Empire would within a calculable time be overrun and annexed by Russia, then there would be no prospect for the profitable investment of German capital in Asiatic Turkey. But Russia aims mainly at the outlet from the Black Sea by the Straits, and the sphere of a Russo-Turkish conflict in Asia would lie on the line from Erzeroum to Angora. The route chosen for the Bagdad Railway lies almost entirely outside this sphere, and it is, moreover, to be anticipated that by connection with the Smyrna-Karahissar line the important trade route will be via Smyrna and not Haidar-Pasha. If, as has sometimes been mooted, Russia's interests demand an outlet on the Gulf of Alexandretta, then the attitude of German enterprise towards the Bagdad Railway would have to be carefully reconsidered, and its starting-point possibly sought at a port on that gulf or even further south. But the only really paramount interest of Russia lies in the closing of the Straits, or, at least, of the Bosphorus, to foreign ships of war, and she can afford to be indifferent to what takes place in the districts south and west of a line from below the Dardanelles to Diarbekir.

It cannot be sufficiently repeated and insisted upon that if Turkey were destined to continue to play the part of a weak State, constantly at the mercy of her powerful neighbour, it would be most unwarrantable to risk a large amount of German capital in an undertaking like the Bagdad Railway, but the results of the Greek war have shown a great improvement in the Turkish army, and the extension of railway communications will afford her the possibility of improving her capacity for defence and her political stability. Only if Turkey grows strong in a political and military sense can Germany venture to invest hundreds of millions of marks in the railway and in the development of the districts through which it will pass. "For a weak Turkey not a penny, for a strong one as much as she may desire."

Germany, however, does not dream of monopolizing Turkey, in an economic sense. It would be far more desirable that the Great Powers concerned should agree to mark out certain spheres of interest, without touching the political integrity of the Turkish Empire; when Russia would doubtless claim northern Asia Minor, where for military reasons she could not tolerate modern means of communication not under her control, and France would make good her traditional claims to Syria.

Much harm has been done by irresponsible suggestions as to German colonization in Asiatic Turkey. No such thing is possible, as Anatolia is the stronghold of the Mahommedan Turks and the Ottoman Government would never tolerate Christian emigration there, while the climate in Syria and Mesopotamia is not suited to white labour.

II. *The Economic Basis of the Scheme.*

The cost of construction of the railway has been calculated at an average of nearly 10,000*l.* per kilom., including inevitable "expenses" peculiar to the East. To provide interest on this an annual revenue of 600*l.* per kilom. would be required, whereas not more than 200*l.* of receipts can at first be counted upon. The Turkish Government

would therefore have to provide in the beginning at least 600,000*l.* a-year for kilometric guarantee, but could easily do so if allowed to raise the rate of customs duties to 15 per cent. *ad valorem*. This, however, will improve as time goes on. Upon the opening of the railway will follow an increase both of population and of revenue. The railway will only pay when the countries through which it passes have again attained the prosperity they possessed in ancient times. As soon as the economic effects of the railway have reached their full development, Anatolia, Northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Irak will be able together to export as much grain as the whole of Russia does to-day.

Among the developments to be expected is a large increase in the cultivation of cotton. North-western Mesopotamia and the neighbouring parts of Syria were in ancient times one of the most important centres of cotton cultivation. Climate and soil are still the same, and it is only insecurity and want of communications which now prevent this, or indeed any cultivation. The revival must be initiated by foreign capital, by means of Plantation Companies which would rent large tracts of land from the Turkish Government, either to sub-let to small farmers or to work themselves with native labour. If German enterprise should succeed in meeting the greater part of the German demand for raw cotton from Mesopotamia instead of importing that article from America, it would be at the same time creating a market for German industrial products; and Germany would have a right to claim preferential treatment for her wares in a country she had opened up and developed by her own capital.

Another source of wealth in the regions traversed by the Bagdad Railway are the naphtha springs, which extend in a broad zone from the Iranian foothills across the Euphrates and Tigris to the Arabian desert. The towns of Kerkuk, Tekrit on the Tigris, and Hit on the Euphrates, belong to this belt. The naphtha springs at Kerkuk and the escape of natural gas in the neighbourhood exceed in volume the similar phenomena observed in the vicinity of Baku before boring was commenced. The only thing to be feared is that foreign speculators may succeed in securing the right to exploit Mesopotamian naphtha before the monopoly can be obtained for Germany. The naphtha question is the more important as there are but few indications of coal on the route of the railway, the only promising field being in the neighbourhood of Eregli, north-west of the passes of the Silician Taurus.

The great wealth of Mesopotamia and Babylonia will, however, lie in the future, as it did in the past, in the production of grain. Two regions can be distinguished, a northern one in which the rainfall suffices for cultivation, and a southern one in which irrigation is necessary. (On the map attached to the pamphlet the former is indicated by vertical, the latter by horizontal, red lines.) It was so in ancient times also, and all investigations prove that nothing has altered in external natural conditions since those days which would render a return to the former prosperity of the country impossible. Although a large part of the rainfall region is at present desert, it is not necessarily so, as nomadic Arabs often grow small crops of barley there for their horses. With settled conditions the whole of the zone could again be brought under cultivation.

In the irrigation region the conditions are more difficult, but at the same time more promising. The rainfall ceases to suffice for cultivation about the latitude of Kerkuk, and the whole of the sawad, or "black earth," formed by the deposits of the rivers requires irrigation. More than two-thirds of this area, however, have, by over a thousand years of neglect, been reduced to such a condition that only very extensive and costly works could remove the evil. Of the remaining third only a fraction is at present under cultivation, but here European capital could be well employed in irrigation works. The former region, the reclaiming of which would probably have to be deferred for a generation after the Bagdad Railway is completed, includes the marshy districts between the Tigris and the Iranian foot-hills below Kut-el-Amara, and on both sides of the Euphrates from Babylon to Bussorah, also the whole country between the rivers south of Babylon and the broad marshes on both sides of the Shatt-el-Arab. The areas which could at once be dealt with are:—

1. The land between the rivers from Feludja to the ruins of Kufa on the Euphrates, and from Samarra to Kut-el-Amara on the Tigris.
2. The land on the left bank of the Tigris from Tekrit to Bagdad.
3. The ancient irrigation area of the Nihrwan Canal and the Dijala.

For these three areas about 700 kilom. of irrigation canals would be required, which would cost from 1,200,000*l.* to 1,500,000*l.* There is little reason to doubt that irrigation works would yield a profitable return. It can be shown that in the days of Haroun-al-Rashid, about 800 A.D., the population of Mesopotamia was 6,000,000, whereas it is now only 1,500,000. Again, there are records extant of the amount of land tax paid to King Chosru 1 dollar in the sixth century, from which it can be deduced that the grain produc-

tion of Mesopotamia must at that time have exceeded 10,000,000 tons. This amount would suffice to feed from 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 people, and if the same figure could again be reached, at least two-thirds of the crop would be available for exportation, even allowing for an increase of the population up to its former level. If a foreign Irrigation Company took the whole matter in hand, it could take payment in kind up to one-fifth or one-quarter of the crop, pay off the Government tithes, and have a margin left which would amply repay the capital outlay. In the districts served by the existing railways in Anatolia a considerable impetus has already been given to agriculture, and the tithes have shown a notable increase.

Both the Bagdad Railway itself and the development of the districts through which it will pass are undertakings on a very large scale, from participation in which it would neither be wise nor possible to attempt to exclude non-German capital. There can be no question of creating in any part of the Turkish Empire a field of monopoly for German industry and German influence, and this not only for political, but also for economic reasons.

III. *The Route of the Bagdad Railway and the Districts it will traverse.*

The total length of the line from Haidar-Pasha to Koweit will be about 2,500 kilom. (1,550 miles), and it naturally divides itself into five distinct sections:—

1. From the Bosphorus to the foot of the Cilician Taurus.
2. From the Taurus to the Upper Euphrates.
3. From the Euphrates to the commencement of the Babylonian Plain below Tekrit.
4. From the latter point to Bussorah on the Shatt-el-Arab.
5. From Bussorah to Koweit.

As regards the first section, the route to the Euphrates viâ Koniah was not the one originally planned. The first project of a line viâ Sivas, Kharput, and Diarbekir was, however, relinquished not on political grounds only, but because it would have been quite 200 kilom. longer, and would have encountered great engineering difficulties. The Turkish Government would have preferred the northern route as being of greater strategic value, but the sums required for kilometric guarantee would have been much larger.

The second section is by far the most difficult, and will probably involve the construction of a tunnel several kilometres in length. Curiously enough the Sultan insists in a most decided manner that the railway shall nowhere approach to within less than half a day's march from the coast, for fear of its being attacked from the sea. The Company, however, have maintained their demand to touch Adana, whence an English railway leads to the port of Mersina.

From Jerablus (somewhat south of Birjik on the Euphrates) onwards there are no further serious technical difficulties. It was originally intended to take the line viâ Urfa, but later it was decided to go straight viâ Nisibis through the desert to Mosul. The principal reason for this change was doubtless the saving in expense, but it can also be maintained that it is better to go through the very middle of the country, now a desert, which it is hoped that the railway will restore to cultivation. On the whole line from Jerablus to Bussorah there is hardly a single kilometre which cannot be made fertile or has not a promising future in other ways, and there are no engineering difficulties beyond a few marshy tracts of very small extent and the great bridge over the Lower Euphrates.

It is not probable that the connection between Adana and Mersina will suffice for the requirements of the railway, and another outlet to the Mediterranean will have to be sought, possibly at Seleucia, the ancient port of Antioch. The natural route of the trade of the river basins of the Euphrates and Tigris, towards the west, is the valley of the Orontes, and that part of Northern Syria was formerly most prosperous; indeed, if only German, and not also Turkish, interests were involved, the section between Koniah and the Cilician Plain could be omitted. Two reasons, however, make the completion of the Anatolian line necessary, viz., Turkish military requirements, and the rapid mail route to India.

The whole district from Urfa to beyond Mosul is at present devastated by the Kurdish Hamidieh of the "Generals" Ibrahim and Mustapha, but the railway will doubtless put an end at once and for good to their outrages.

A matter of special interest in regard to the Bagdad Railway is the question of the point where it will reach the Persian Gulf. To enter Persian territory would involve negotiations with another Government; moreover, Muhammerah, as well as Bussorah, is

within the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab, and, therefore, not approachable by large ocean steamers. Koweit, on the Arabian coast, offers an excellent and well-known harbour, but it has been said that England has designs upon this place. If Koweit were really to be withdrawn from Turkish suzerainty, and brought within the British sphere of power, this would constitute a severe blow to both European and Turkish interests.

So far as German economic interests are concerned, and even regarding the military requirements of Turkey also, it might be as well not to connect the Bagdad Railway with the Persian Gulf. When the railway is finished to Bagdad, the Syrian ports would be able to compete successfully with Bussorah and Koweit in the export and import trade of Mesopotamia, and a good harbour on the Gulf of Alexandretta will be far easier to obtain than one at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. The Persian Gulf will probably remain under the control of England, and, perhaps, shortly of Russia also, and a German naval station in those waters would arouse much international jealousy. It is most important to prevent England from acquiring Koweit. If she is allowed to do so, she will have obtained control of the third, shortest also, and most rapid route to India and South-Eastern Asia, and will be able to close and open it as she pleases. The Russians, moreover, are slowly advancing through Persia, and if England takes Koweit, they would no doubt retaliate by occupying Bushire or Bunder Abbas. If, however, these two Great Powers establish themselves with large fleets and fortified harbours on the line of the future new road to India, then the influence that Germany could exert on the development of the trade route created by the Bagdad Railway would be far less than if the neutrality of the Gulf could be secured, and the straits of Ormuz kept open for the trade of all nations.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received August 3.*)

(No. 421.)

My Lord, *Therapia, July 27, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 310 of the 2nd June, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the position of the affairs of the Nestorians, and calling attention to the attempts of Nimrod to create difficulties for the newly-appointed Patriarch.

I have called the attention of the Porte to the state of affairs as reported in this despatch, and have pointed out the danger and impolicy of alienating the Nestorians.

In reply, the Grand Vizier said that he hoped shortly to be able to inform me that Mar Shimun had been accorded the special privileges and honours which he ambitioned, and which were desirable as adding prestige to his position.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 67.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 23.)

Sir, *Van, July 5, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Mar Shimun was in Van during the early part of June. He was received in a very friendly way by the Vali, who promised to forward and favourably recommend all his petitions as regards decorations, salaries, &c. Though the Vali was kind, I think he is rather lukewarm, and sitting on the fence between Mar Shimun and what he knows to be the desires of the Nestorian nation on the one side, and Nimrod and Père de France on the other.

Nimrod is now in Van, having arrived about a fortnight ago. The Vali tells me that there is no chance of his receiving any countenance from the Government; that he can effect nothing against Mar Shimun, that it is obvious he is only trying to get some personal advantage for himself; and that, if left alone, he will come to grief in time.

The reports I get from Gever and Kochannes would seem to show that this may be too optimistic a view. Nimrod and his small following appear to be so exasperated by the turn events have taken, that they are determined to make trouble somehow—by

threatening to seize the keys of the churches, by interfering with Mar Shimun's jurisdiction, beating and abusing his adherents, &c. The latter are so exasperated that Malik Ismail, of Upper Tujari, and some of the chief men of the Nestorians, have sent a telegram to the Vali saying that the Government must turn Nimrod out of Kochannes, and the priests he brought with him from Mosul, or that the Ashirets will take Mar Shimun away, and that, for what happens next, the Government must blame only itself.

I mentioned in my No. 17, the Hekkiari clan-feeling that exists between certain Kurds and the Nestorians. The Agha of the Pinyanish Kurds has also written to the Government to say that he will not consent to have any foreign religion brought in among them.

It is reported that a telegram was sent from Mosul to the French Ambassador that the new Mar Shimun was on his way to Mosul, and would be consecrated there, and that all recognition from the Porte should be for him, as the rival candidate was a boy of 14, and of no consequence. It seems unlikely that these people could have wired direct to the French Ambassador, but it is believed down there. I hear that reports are assiduously spread, and meet with more credence than they deserve at the hands of the ignorant people, of the power of the French Ambassador and the French Consul at Van; the one has the Sultan in his hand, and the other can do what he likes with the Vali, especially since he brought him a French decoration. I indicated the probability of such results, as a consequence of the entanglement of politics and religion in this country, in my No. 11 of the 1st April.

It seems that the Government favours the idea of internal strife among the Nestorians, and that the Vali inclines to the policy of *divide et impera*, or he could easily quell Nimrod's faction.

If things go on as they are there may be serious trouble. Should the machinations of this new party have the result (which seems not unlikely) of rousing the Nestorians to some regrettable act of violence, it would give the necessary excuse for sending soldiers amongst them, and probably Kurds. It is possible that the Turkish authorities would not be altogether adverse to this *dénouement*.

The large districts of Jilu and Diz are in a very bad way from excessive taxation and the mode of collecting the same.

Still, as the amounts they complain of have been usual for the last few years, and so have, in a measure, the sanction of precedent, I do not feel that any good purpose would be served by taking the matter up here. Besides, I suppose the Osmanli Government has a right to tax its own subjects as it sees fit, even though it appears in many cases to be following a suicidal policy, and killing the goose which lays the golden eggs.

The facts would seem as follows, though I do not vouch for the accuracy of the figures. Some five-and-thirty years ago, the Jilu tribute was settled at £T. 130. About six years ago, the Local Government began to claim, and to enforce, the payment of much larger sums; £T. 600, £T. 700, £T. 800, first as arrears, then as the regular annual tribute.

In 1901, on Mr. Satow's representation, the Vali promised that Jilu should only pay its "usual" tribute. The Kaimakam at Diza interpreted the "usual" tribute to mean the sum exacted during the past few years, *i.e.*, the increased amount, including the exactions against which the appeal to the Vali was made; and so it has continued. The Maliks of Upper and Lower Jilu visited Van the other day with Mar Shimun, and presented an "erzuhal" to the Vali. He readily acceded to their request that only £T. 150 should be taken, and gave them a letter to that effect to the Mutessarif of Hekkiari at Bashkala.

The latter, however, said that the proper amount due was £T. 800, according to his books, and sent a telegram to the Vali in that sense. The Vali now says that his records show that £T. 800 has always been paid. If that be so, it is a pity he did not consult his records before answering the Maliks as he did. As a matter of fact, there are no proper records; receipts are not given or not recognized, and the whole method of fiscal administration is careless. This consulting of records simply shows what the official concerned wishes to show—much as does the report of a Turkish Mufettish, or Committee of Inquiry.

The Jilu Maliks aver that if the records of the past thirty-five years were honestly searched (not merely those of the last six years or so), they would show that the settled tax is according to their statement.

The case of Diz is on all fours with the above, except that the amounts are smaller. The people say that their tax is from £T. 40 to £T. 60, while Government are now taking £T. 244.

The Kurdish district of Oramar was assessed for tax at the same time as Jilu, and for the same amount, some £T. 130. This has, I believe, been very triflingly increased since; and the men of Jilu complain that, if the Government must have so much more money, why should it all come from them, instead of the increase being equally divided between Jilu, Oramar, and Dastig (another adjoining Kurdish district)?

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 432.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 29, 1903.*

IN my despatch No. 254 of the 12th May last, I had the honour to report to your Lordship's representations I had made to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in favour of certain Armenian Protestants of Kessab, who, as I learnt from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, had been unjustly imprisoned.

I have now the satisfaction of reporting to your Lordship that the persons in question have recently been released, and I transmit herewith Mr. Barnham's report on the subject.*

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 69.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 220.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July 30, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith translation of an article from to-day's "Novoe Vremya," pointing out the commercial and political advantages likely to accrue to Germany by the construction of the Bagdad Railway. The writer states that the Bagdad Railway possesses an organization without parallel in any other railway system, viz., the system of so-called Commercial Agents whose activity, it is predicted, will soon reach districts properly within the Russian sphere of influence, the adoption of economic measures being recommended as urgent, with a view to counteract the growth of German influence in Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(For Sir C. Scott),
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of July 17 (30), 1903.

(Translation.)

THE GERMANS IN ANATOLIA.—Three days ago work was begun on the Konia-Eregli section of the Bagdad Railway. This fact is not only of importance to us as the commencement of the Bagdad Railway, but also from the point of view of the extension of German influence in the Near East.

This is a new and grave advance of Germany towards the peaceful conquest of Asia Minor—a measure which cannot be neutralized even by the entire annulment of the whole Bagdad project. Suppose the construction of the further section from Eregli to the Bay of Alexandretta be deferred indefinitely—even so, the extension of the existing line, 150 miles further to the east, cuts deep into the heart of Asia Minor.

Besides the German line, there are French and English railways in Asia Minor. Of all the non-German lines, it may be said that they serve purely commercial objects, protected, of course, by the Governments to which they belong, but not threatening the

* Not printed.

interests of other nations in the districts which they traverse. But this unfortunately cannot be said of the German Anatolian Railway, which is an exclusively German enterprise and serves purely German objects.

By the aid of its railway, Germany is achieving the conquest of the markets of Asia Minor, and with the conquest of the markets is consolidating its political influence in the country.

It owes these great results to the peculiar organization of the Anatolian Railway—an organization which has not its parallel in any other railway system, and is therefore deserving of careful attention.

The essence of this organization consists in the system of the so-called Commercial Agents of the Anatolian Railway—who are now covering the eastern part of the peninsula, and will spread further east with the advance of the railway till their activity reaches districts which are properly within our sphere of interest.

These Commercial Agents are established at all the principal places within 250 to 300 miles of the railway—which at the present moment has its termini at Angora and Konia. When any article arrives at a station and is forwarded to any place where there is an Agent, the sender receives at that station, part of the cost of its carriage by mule or waggon to the place of destination. This facilitates the transport of merchandise to distant points, so that it is almost as easy to send goods to distant places as to stations on the railway. Nor is this all; the German Government has instituted the system of special through rates from all stations on the German lines along the Anatolian Railway, and the Railway Administration undertakes all responsibility for the delivery of the goods. And the German Anatolian Railway plays a great part in the direction of the export trade, for special facilities are given at the Anatolian stations for transport on the German railways.

Of course, the Railway authorities are not restricted to their official duties. They collect all sorts of commercial intelligence, and enter into direct relations with the native population—supply them with agricultural implements, with seeds of the best qualities, &c. It is obvious that all this must increase the prestige of Germany. Such are the measures by which Germany is obtaining control of Asia Minor, and that is why even an extension of 150 miles of the railway deserves our most serious attention.

It is vain to attempt to meet such a policy by mere diplomatic measures. The measures we must take are of an economic nature, and to be useful, they must be taken at once.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received August* 3.)

(No. 115.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 2, 1903.

A TELEGRAM received from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum states that a conflict took place near Shenik on the 23rd ultimo between Armenians and Turkish troops acting with Kurds, and ended in the retreat of the Armenians to Talori. 800 rifles have been distributed to Kurdish tribes. Mr. Hampson strongly urges that military measures should in no case be punitive, and should be strictly limited to preventive steps for fear lest they may lead to a repetition of the acts of 1894 and 1895. The Russian and French Consuls at Erzeroum are telegraphing in the same sense.

It is reported by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis that troops from Moush and Diabekir are, together with the Kurds, besieging Sassun, where several hundred revolutionaries have assembled, and it is feared excesses may be committed both there and at Moush if a conflict takes place.

I have already spoken seriously at the Porte in the sense suggested by Mr. Hampson, and I propose to impress upon the Grand Vizier to-morrow, as strongly as I can, the terrible nature of the responsibility which the Porte would incur in the event of any repetition of the events of past years resulting from an outbreak of the Kurds, who have been armed by the Government and allowed to follow the regular army.

The Porte up to the present has been disposed to minimize the whole affair, and I am assured by it that the measures taken in connection with the revolutionary bands are for the most part preventive, but I am feeling anxious with regard to the development of events in view of the many symptoms of uneasiness which have been for some time past appearing in the neighbourhood in question.

No. 70*.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 149.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 3, 1903.*

ARMENIAN disorders.

I have received your telegram No. 116 of yesterday's date, and approve of the instructions to the Vice-Consul which you suggest, and of the representations you have already made, and of those which you further propose to make.

The responsibility for any disorder which may occur will rest entirely on the Ottoman Government, and you cannot impress this too strongly upon them.

No. 72*.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 150.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 4, 1903.*

ARMENIAN disorders.

I approve the visit of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis to Moush as proposed in your telegram No. 117 of to-day.

I propose, subject to your Lordship's approval, to instruct Mr. Heathcote to proceed from Bitlis to Moush, where I think a good effect will be produced by his presence, especially if the Russian or French Consul accompanies him.

No. 71.

Question asked in the House of Commons, August 4, 1903.

Mr. Reginald Lucas,—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he can give any official information to the effect that the Bagdad railway line is to be constructed exclusively with German capital.

Answer.

We have no official information to this effect, and the matter seems to be still under discussion.

No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received August 4.*)

(No. 117.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 3, 1903.*

GRAND VIZIER promises immediate inquiry into statement, reported in my telegram No. 115, that the regular army is followed by Kurds, and that arms have been distributed to Kurdish tribes. He assures me that the Vali of Bitlis has been informed, by telegraph, that the Porte holds him personally responsible for any excesses in the Moush or Sassun districts. His Highness says that, without orders from Constantinople, no military movement is to be undertaken, but that about 300 revolutionists had crossed the Russian frontier and were distributed in Sassun. He seems to realize the responsibility which the Ottoman Government will incur and to be alive to the danger of Kurdish excesses.

I am still of opinion that it will be well for our Vice-Consul at Bitlis to go to Moush, whither I hear the Russian Consul is already gone.

No. 73.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 220.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August 6, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 432 of the 29th ultimo, reporting the release of the Armenian Protestants of Kessab, who had been unjustly imprisoned.

I have learned with satisfaction of the successful result of your Excellency's representations on behalf of these persons.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received August 10.*)

(No. 433.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 4, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 115 and 117 of the 2nd and 3rd instant, I have the honour to report that at an interview with the Grand Vizier yesterday I

impressed upon his Highness as strongly as I could the grave responsibility that would call upon the Ottoman Government if unfortunately there was a repetition of the terrible events of 1894 and 1895 at Sassun and elsewhere, and that if it were true, as had been reported to me by His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, that Kurds were allowed to follow the regular army and 800 rifles had been distributed to each of three Kurdish tribes, nothing would excuse, in the eyes of the world, such dangerous and, I might say criminal, proceedings.

In reply, his Highness partly admitted that the troops were followed by Kurds, as he said that he had sent strict instructions to the military and civil authorities to see that they were restrained from attack and outrages upon the inhabitants; and that he had told the Vali of Bitlis that no military movement against the insurgents should be undertaken without direct orders from here, and that he would be held personally responsible for any excesses committed by the soldiers or Kurds.

As to the reported distribution of 2,400 rifles to three Kurdish tribes he professed extreme surprise, and assured me he had no knowledge of it. He asked me, however, to give him the names of the tribes, and he telegraphed at once to the local authorities for information and explanations.

I further pointed out to his Highness the disastrous effect that would be produced, not only throughout Europe but also in Macedonia, if at this juncture proper steps were not taken to prevent all danger of a massacre of the Christians and to restrain the cruel and lawless Kurds from the excesses which, there was reason to believe, they were only waiting for an opportunity to perpetrate.

His Highness assured me in very earnest language that nothing he could do would be neglected to prevent disasters such as I feared, and that I might rely upon his immediately taking steps to restrain the Kurds and to prevent them leaving their wonted habitations.

I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the same sense, and informed him that I proposed, if I received your Lordship's permission, sending our Vice-Consul at Bitlis to Moush, where I hoped his mere presence would have a good effect besides enabling me to form an opinion of the efficacy of the measures and precautions taken by the Imperial authorities.

Upon receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 149 approving of the representations made to the Porte and authorizing me to direct His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis to proceed to Moush, I telegraphed to Mr. Heathcote to do so.

The French Ambassador, to whom I communicated the substance of the representations I had made to the Porte and who had two days ago also spoken to the Grand Vizier on the subject, said that he would again see his Highness at the earliest opportunity, and that as he had no Consular officer at Bitlis he would probably instruct the French Vice-Consul at Van to proceed to Moush, whither, I understood from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Russian Consul had already gone.

I ought, perhaps, to mention that both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Grand Vizier told me that they believed the revolutionaries, who numbered at least 300, had crossed the frontier from Russia. They both admitted that the Armenians were not in a frame of mind to welcome the insurgents, but that the Kurds and others who looked upon public disturbances as an opportunity for murder and rapine were only too anxious to promote an incipient revolution, which would give them the excuse they desired. They think it is possible that the revolutionaries are affiliated in some degree with the Macedonian Committees, and that the fact of the incursion of revolutionaries from across the Russian border being coincident with a recrudescence of insurrectionary activity and outrage in the Balkan Peninsula is at all events curious, and lends force to the presumption.

I have the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship, in paraphrase, the several telegrams which I have received from His Majesty's Consular officers at Erzeroum and Bitlis in connection with this subject and those which I addressed to them.

While writing I have received the inclosed further telegrams from Bitlis describing the pessimistic view taken of the situation by the Armenian Bishop.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 74.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, July* 29, 1903.

I LEARN that it has been decided to undertake military operations against the Armenian revolutionaries in Sassoon.

Inclosure 2 in No. 74.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, July* 30, 1903.

THE troops to be employed in the operations referred to in my telegram will be sent from Moush, and will be accompanied by mountain guns. It is important that the operations should be in no case punitive, but strictly preventive, as otherwise they may result in reproducing the events of 1894 and 1895.

It is difficult to understand that the revolutionaries should have been allowed by the authorities to cross the frontier and collect in Sassoon.

Reports in this sense are being telegraphed to their Embassies by my French and Russian colleagues.

Inclosure 3 in No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to Mr. Hampson.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Therapia, July* 31, 1903.

I AM telegraphing to His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis for news, as the Porte denies statements about Sassoon and says that action is confined to discovering the whereabouts of revolutionary bands.

Inclosure 4 in No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to Mr. Heathcote.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Therapia, July* 31, 1903.

WHAT is the situation at Sassoon, and are troops moving from Moush on former place?

Inclosure 5 in No. 74.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, July* 31, 1903.

I WOULD emphasize the opinion which I expressed in my telegram of yesterday that to prevent an attack on Sassoon would be the best course to diminish disorder arising from the situation there. The establishment of a cordon round the district should be the limit of military operations.

Inclosure 6 in No. 74.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, August* 1, 1903.

THE declaration of Porte, mentioned in your Excellency's telegram of yesterday, amounts to a decision to attack, as the whereabouts of the bands are admittedly known to the authorities.

Inclosure 7 in No. 74.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, August* 1, 1903.

A FIGHT took place between the troops, assisted by Kurds, and Armenians, at Shenik, on the 23rd ultimo. Two Armenians, eight Kurds, and two soldiers were killed. Shenik and Semal have been abandoned by the Armenians, who moved off in the direction of Talori.

Three Kurdish tribes have been armed with 800 rifles each by the authorities.

Inclosure 8 in No. 74.

Mr. Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bitlis, August* 2, 1903.

I AM informed by the Vali, who has just returned from visiting the district affected by the earthquake, that three companies of troops from Moush have been dispatched to Sassoon, as in other years, to maintain the peace between the nomad and native tribes, and that sixty gendarmes were also being sent.

He professed not to have any apprehension of disturbances, as the revolutionaries assembled in Sassoon from abroad did not number 100.

Armenians recently arrived from Moush give more alarming reports. According to them the number of revolutionaries at Sassoon is at least 300, that considerable numbers of troops drawn from Guendj, Moush, and other parts of the vilayet, and even from Diarbekir, have been collected and are practically besieging Sassoon with Kurdish assistance. They are very apprehensive that fighting will take place and result in excesses both in Moush and Sassoon.

Inclosure 9 in No. 74.

Mr. Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bitlis, August* 4, 1903.

VALI denies that any military movement is intended and declares that in consequence of his report the doubling of Moush garrison sanctioned by the Iradé has been abandoned; Moushir maintains that a new enrolment would be necessary before it could be effected.

In view of Vali's reputation I have some doubt whether he can cope with situation, but he speaks as if alive to the difficulties of it.

I learn from the newly-arrived Armenian Bishop-Elect that he is convinced that the aim of the revolutionaries is to force reprisals by violence with a view to foreign intervention, and that he despairs of persuading them of the hopelessness of such a policy.

No. 75.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 10.)

(No. 446.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August* 4, 1903.

HIS Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem telegraphed to me on the 29th ultimo that Moressa Bey, the Kurdish Chief, whose atrocities in Armenia in the eighties rendered him so infamously notorious, has succeeded in effecting his escape with five other prisoners, and that an attempt made by the Mutesarif of Jerusalem to intercept him at Gaza has failed.

It will be within your Lordship's recollection that the innumerable brutalities and outrages committed by this ruffian on the Armenians provoked such an outcry that the Porte consented, under strong pressure in 1890, to bring him to Constantinople, where he was tried by a special Court in the presence of delegates from the Embassies, but that although overwhelming evidence brought against him would have justified a sentence of death, he was merely exiled to Medina.

His escape at this moment, when there are such grave causes to apprehend a renewal of trouble in Eastern Asia Minor, is an ominous coincidence, if nothing more.

I have informed His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum of his escape, and requested the Porte to do all they can to effect his capture.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 76.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 451. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August* 8, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 520 of the 29th November, 1902, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from the Acting Consul-General at Beyrout, inclosing translations of petitions which have been drawn up against Mouzaffer Pasha's policy in the Lebanon, and a Memorandum on the causes of his Excellency's unpopularity.

I have requested Mr. Richards to furnish me with a complete list of the newly-created offices and taxes which the petitioners complain of, and with an explanation of the grounds on which they are alleged to be contrary to the Organic Statute.

I fear there is no doubt that Mouzaffer Pasha is wanting in tact, discretion, and judgment, and that the influence of his wife is baneful, but I have always understood from Mr. Drummond-Hay's reports that he is a man of undoubted honesty and integrity. Many of the complaints made against the Governor-General are probably due to the intrigues of the Arslan family, who desire to regain power, and doubtless hope, by discrediting Mouzaffer Pasha, to put a member of the Franco family again in office.

I inclose copy of a despatch from Mr. Drummond-Hay of the 11th December last, in which he reports and comments on the appointment of Nessib Bey Jumblat to be Kaïmakam of the Shûf, which Mr. Richards cites as the first of the causes of Mouzaffer Pasha's unpopularity.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 76.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 88.)

Sir, *Beyrout, July* 31, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that petitions are now being circulated and signed all over the Lebanon in which the "arbitrary" and "unconstitutional" conduct of the Governor-General, in creating new posts and imposing new taxes contrary to the will and likely to be highly prejudicial to the interests of the people, are characterized, as your Excellency will perceive from specimens of these documents transmitted herewith, in language of extreme censure.

These petitions, which are addressed to the Palace, the Grand Vizierate, the Embassies of the Six Great Powers, and the Idara Mejliss of the Lebanon respectively, are very similarly worded, the one to the other, and constitute an appeal *ad misericordiam*, a great point being made of the poverty of the country and the continuous emigration of its inhabitants. I regret to state that the feeling against the Pasha is very strong, not only among his political opponents, but even in circles where formerly he was regarded with respectful sympathy.

The immediate causes of this hostile movement may be stated to be somewhat as follows:—

The Idara Mejliss of the Lebanon has, as I believe your Excellency is already aware, accepted in principle all the newly created offices and taxes, with the exception of the Inspectorships of Justice, public instruction, public health, agriculture and forests, Municipalities and Assistant Inspectorship of Justice.

Even as to these new posts, there was and is no intention of opposing their creation with the exception of that of Inspectorships of Municipalities, which is a proposal which has met with very marked disapprobation.

The Pasha has, perhaps, somewhat unwisely persisted in urging on the Council the necessity of appointing these new functionaries, and even went so far as to nominate a certain Emir Saïd Arslan as Inspector of the Municipalities of the Shûf Caza. This official, in the course of his tour of inspection, formed the opinion that two additional policemen should be engaged for service in the Municipality of Ba'aklin, and stated as much in the report which he subsequently sent in to the Pasha.

The latter referred the matter to the Idara Mejliss, who refused to consider the proposal, and seized the opportunity to draw up a mazbata, in which they protested against the creation of these posts and the direct intervention of the Pasha in the fiscal affairs of the Municipalities.

Thereupon the Municipality of Deir-el-Kamar refused to accept the Inspector appointed by the Pasha, in consequence of which the latter went in person to that township and did his utmost to induce the inhabitants to reverse their decision. This, however, they obstinately refused to do, which so irritated his Excellency that he took forcible possession of the Municipal chest and the account books. Upon this the Municipality appealed to the Ministry of the Interior, in a telegram of which I beg to transmit the tenour with its accompanying translation.

It was then that these petitions were drawn up, printed, and are now being circulated for signature all over the mountain.

It cannot be denied that the matter has created everywhere very considerable excitement, and in some quarters indignation, the fact being that the people as a whole are opposed to the creation of new offices, and therefore of the fresh taxes which such creation necessitates. Even so, however, it is doubtful how far the movement would have assumed so bitter and so general a form had not Mouzaffer Pasha already become unpopular for reasons which I have stated in a Confidential memorandum, which I also beg to inclose herewith.

It is very much to be regretted that public feeling should be running so high against a functionary whose zeal and honesty and good intentions are admitted on all hands, but whose discretion, unfortunately, is not equally unimpeachable.

I might mention, in conclusion, that the chief originators and instigators of this movement are the Emir Mustapha Arslan, Iskander Bey Tuéni, Sheikh Reshed-el-Khazen, the ex-Kaïmakam of the Metn Caza, and other malcontents. I am also given to understand that the Maronite Patriarch is countenancing, secretly if not openly, the signing of the Petitions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 76.

Petition to the Grand Vizier.

(Translation.)

YOUR servants, the Lebanese of all religions and sects, beg to state that we would wish not to have disturbed His Imperial Majesty our Sovereign by complaining of the acts of our Governor-General, Mouzaffer Pasha, only nine months after his arrival at his post; but as his Excellency, by his arbitrary conduct and his mutually contradictory proceedings, has not been content with overthrowing the order of the Administration, showing disregard for the regulations of the Empire, poisoning and disturbing people's minds by his extraordinary projects, but has even gone so far as to violate the Organic Statute of our mountain by imposing new taxes, and by creating many new offices which are not necessary. And whereas our poverty, which has caused the emigration of more than 60,000 souls to foreign countries, does not permit us to accept new taxes and imposts which are contrary to the spirit of the said Organic Statute, granted to us by His Imperial Majesty, we therefore find ourselves obliged to lay this, our present Petition, before your Highness, and to solicit from your justice that you would give your orders for the abolition of the said taxes, offices, and increase of salaries which our Governor has newly created, and that the necessary precautionary measures should at once be taken in order to prevent the bad consequences of his capricious and arbitrary conduct.

Another copy to the Palace, couched in the same terms.

Inclosure 3 in No. 76.

Petition to the Ambassadors.

(Translation.)

WE, the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon, without distinction of race or creed, have the honour to state that we would have wished not to trouble the Sublime Porte and the Ambassadors of the Great Powers by complaining of the deeds of our Governor-General, Mouzaffer Pasha, only nine months after his arrival at his post; but whereas his Excellency, by his arbitrary conduct, his extraordinary theories, and his mutually contradictory acts, has not only overthrown the order of the Administration, disregarded the regulations, created confusion in the state of affairs, and disturbed men's minds, but has even gone so far as to violate the Organic Statute of our mountain by imposing new taxes and creating many new offices which have never existed during the government of any of his predecessors. And whereas our poverty, which has forced a great portion of us to emigrate to the ends of the earth in order to gain a living, does not permit us to accept new taxes and offices which are contrary to the spirit of the said Organic Law, which is sanctioned by the Great Powers, we find ourselves obliged to lay our complaints before the Palace, the Sublime Porte, and the Ambassadors of the Great Powers, and it has been deemed necessary to present this Petition to your Excellency, begging you to take the necessary steps, in conjunction with the Sublime Porte, in order to abolish these taxes, imposts, new offices, and increase of salaries, which our Governor has created, and to deliver us from his arbitrary rule.

Inclosure 4 in No. 76.

The Inhabitants of the Lebanon to the Members of the Idara Mejliss.

(Translation.)

Gentlemen,

YOU are well aware of the poor condition of the inhabitants of the Lebanon, of the sterility of our lands, and of the lack of resources, so that a great many of us have been obliged to emigrate, to expose themselves to the dangers of a journey to the ends of the earth, and to undergo the difficulties and troubles of expatriation—and all that with the sole object of gaining our livelihood, and so protecting our lives and those of our families from dying of hunger; while, on the other hand, a large number of us who still live in this country suffer the evils of poverty to such an extent that we deserve pity and compassion.

Notwithstanding this miserable state of things, we hear that his Excellency our Governor-General has created new taxes and offices which are not required by the Administration. And whereas these taxes and offices are contrary to the Organic Statute of Mount Lebanon, granted to us by the Imperial Government and confirmed by the six Great Powers; and, on the other hand, our pecuniary state does not permit us to bear new taxes, new salaries, and offices which are not necessary, we beg of your patriotism and Ottoman zeal to give a unanimous decision rejecting all the said taxes and offices without exception, and by so doing you will have safeguarded the rights of your electors, our Organic Statute, established and maintained by Imperial Iradé, and you will have performed your duties with fidelity.

Inclosure 5 in No. 70.

Telegram sent by the Inhabitants of Deir-el-Kamar to the Ministry of the Interior.

(Translation.)

THE Governor-General of Mount Lebanon, Mouzaffer Pasha, has dismissed the elected members of the Municipality, seized the chest and the books; all this because we have refused to accept the exorbitant tax he has imposed on the Municipal Councils for paying the salaries of the Municipal Inspectors whom he has created without taking into consideration the poverty of the Lebanon, to which Imperial favour has granted a special regulation which does not permit of the imposition on its inhabitants of new taxes such as those which our present Governor-General has created.

We solicit the prompt safeguarding of our rights, and we have recourse to the wisdom of the Commander of the Faithful for the protection from violation of our sacred Statute.

Inclosure 6 in No 76.

Memorandum respecting the Causes of the Unpopularity of Muzaffer Pasha.

(Confidential.)

THESE are unfortunately many, and are so recognized by friends (of whom his Excellency appears to have very few *now*) and foes alike. They may be classed under the following headings:—

1. The dismissal of Emir Shekib Arslan from the post of Kaïmakam of the Shûf and the appointment of the rival of his house, Nessib Bey Jumblat. At first sight this would appear to concern only the partizans of the two rival families, but inasmuch as the Emir Shekib was not dismissed either for incapacity or for maladministration, but rather because he belonged to a family which had held the reins of power longer than was considered to be good for it or the country, and therefore it was deemed advisable that the rival faction should have its turn of administration, he acquired the sympathy, and so his dismisser the disfavour, of many persons who, had matters remained *in statu quo*, would have shown complete indifference as to the course of events. The members of the Arslan clan are, taken as a whole, more intelligent and infinitely more adept at intrigue than their rivals, and have therefore succeeded in exciting an amount of sympathy for and interest in their cause out of all proportion to its real merits. Moreover, they pose as good Ottomans and good Moslems (certainly whenever they find themselves in the society of Turkish officials, and even on other occasions), and so secure the goodwill of the authorities and those who are influenced by them. The Jumblats, on the other hand, are thorough Druses, who are notoriously Anglophile in their proclivities, and therefore not likely to inspire with sympathy either Turkish officials or those who look for guidance to and take their cue from the French and Russian Consulates. Be this as it may, and I do not wish to labour the point, it is an undoubted fact that the beginning of the many troubles in which the Pasha finds himself involved was the overthrow of the Arslans and the accession to power of the Jumblats.

2. His zeal for reform. All reformers are unpopular at first, and the Pasha is no exception to the rule. He is determined to root out abuses, and so all those who have profited by their existence in the past, and desire their continuance in the future, declaim loudly against him, not to mention that numerous class of persons who have "vested interests" which are likely to be unfavourably affected by the proposed changes.

3. The projected increase of taxation, necessitated chiefly by the introduction of the said reforms and changes. This in itself is sufficient to account for the greater part of the discontent which is undoubtedly rampant.

4. His capriciousness, fickleness, and uncertainty of temper in the matter of the nomination and dismissal of his subordinates. This is most bitterly complained of. I am assured that no functionary feels secure in the tenure of his office, even though he has good reason to believe that the Pasha is favourably disposed towards him, and is honestly unconscious of having done anything to displease him. One official has, to my knowledge, been displaced four times in the last eight months, and I am assured that there are many similar cases. This rage—it may almost be so termed—for chopping and changing among the personnel of the Administrative Body has reached such a pitch that it is now very commonly said that the Pasha is mad!

5. The "originality" of Madame Tchaikowska. This takes the form of most imprudent and often factless expressions of opinion for which the Pasha is, perhaps, undeservedly held responsible. But even more harmful than this want of consideration for others is her reckless extravagance, which obliges her to borrow money without her husband's knowledge or consent from persons whose official or social position should secure them from such unseemly applications. Many instances could be given in support of this statement, but suffice it to say that the fact is well known, and it is even hinted by some, by no means malevolent persons, that the Pasha is in reality thoroughly cognizant of these borrowings and profits by them! It is an infinite pity that it should be possible for such aspersions to be made.

6. The fact of the Pasha being already in debt to the extent of, I believe, truly, 350,000 piastres. This is quoted against him, and, as might be expected, the amount of the debt is greatly exaggerated. I have been confidently assured that it is "a well-known

fact" that his Excellency sent £ T. 6,000 to Constantinople soon after his arrival here, and that he is now in debt to the extent of £ T. 9,500! Of course, this is absurd, but it is freely stated, and believed, by many well-meaning persons. Of what use, it is pointed out, is his integrity, if he be already overwhelmed with debt.

7. His lack of reserve in speech with persons who are not worthy of his confidence, and whose admission to his intimacy (apparently) is a matter for regret.

8. Last, but by no means least, the Pasha has contrived to incur the ill-will, if not the enmity, of the Vali of Beyrout and of four out of the six Representatives of the great Powers, viz., France, Russia, Germany, and Italy, the Austrian and British Consulates alone being still friendly disposed towards him.

Personally and socially Mouzaffer Pasha is a well-read, courteous, kindly, and well-intentioned gentleman, whose faults may be attributed largely to inexperience and a certain fickleness of character which has brought him more enemies than anything else.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Beyrout, July 31, 1903.

Inclosure 7 in No. 76.

Consul-General Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir, *Beyrout, December* 11, 1902.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 147 of the 20th ultimo, reporting the dismissal of Emir Shekib Arslan, Kaïmakam of the Shûf, and his subsequent intrigues against the appointment of a Jumblat, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that, on the 8th instant, the Governor-General suddenly appointed Nessib Bey Jumblat to the vacant post.

I understand that this decision was precipitated by the mischievous proceedings of the Arslans, which were endangering the public peace.

The news of the nomination of Nessib Bey was received with great acclamations in the Shûf by at least three-fourths of the Druse and Christian population.

It is reported that the Arslans have now appealed to the Sultan and to all the Ambassadors, excepting the British and French, against the selection made by Mouzaffer Pasha. I trust, however, that their petition will pass unheeded, and that the new Governor will be given a free hand in the choice of his officials.

His Excellency also made other changes in the Kaïmakamliks of North Lebanon, and these, as well as that of the Shûf, were effected entirely on his own initiative, and not through Consular intervention, as the recalcitrant parties will probably have assured in their petition to Constantinople (*sic*).

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 77.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 454.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August* 10, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 411 of the 21st ultimo, relative to the alleged attack by Kurds on the monastery of Surp Agop, near Derekeui, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a *pro-memoria* which I have received from the Porte, conveying to me the substance of the official reports on the subject received from the Valis of Erzeroum and Bitlis.

Your Lordship will observe that the account agrees in the main with the report furnished by His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, which was embodied in my despatch No. 377 of the 1st ultimo. A further Report from Mr. Hampson, just received, is also inclosed herewith.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 77.

Pro-memoriâ.

D'APRÈS les renseignements fournis par les Gouverneurs-Généraux des vilayets d'Erzeroum et de Bitlis au sujet des faits mentionnés dans le Mémoire de l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique en date du 18 Juillet, l'assertion comme quoi un monastère Arménien situé dans le Sandjak d'Erzindjan aurait été pillé par les Kurdes n'est pas exacte. Elle paraît avoir pris naissance dans le fait que certains Arméniens ayant étranglé deux Kurdes à Erzindjan, douze Kurdes se sont rendus dans un but de vengeance au monastère Arménien sis à Déré-Keuy et y ont enlevé un mulet et quelques effets de peu de valeur. Aucun des gens du monastère n'a été tué ni blessé.

Aucun des villages situés dans les parages Kellekozan, partie la plus importante de Sassoun, n'a été abandonné par ses habitants. Quant aux localités qui sont sises à des distances assez grandes de Moush et qui ne sont pas reliées par le fil, le Vali de Bitlis fait savoir que des fonctionnaires y ont été envoyés pour effectuer des enquêtes dont il se réserve de communiquer le résultat à la Sublime Porte.

Le 5 Août, 1903.

Inclosure 2 in No. 77.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, July 29, 1903.

I HAVE made careful inquiries in regard to the attack by Kurds on the monastery of Surp Agop, near Erzingian, of which the Armenian Patriarch informed your Excellency.

No one in Erzeroum seemed to know anything of the matter; but to-day, on visiting the Vali, who has just returned from Erzingian, I learnt from him that such an attack had taken place about two months ago, and that a young Armenian, named Kalost, had been killed, the attack being renewed and some sheep carried off a fortnight later. His Excellency stated that these attacks and murder were a revenge for the murder of a Kurd in which Kalost had been concerned. The murder referred to is one of those mentioned in my despatch No. 13 of the 4th June.

The Vali added that, when at Erzingian, he had looked into this matter, and that he hoped to bring the guilty parties to justice; that he had spoken strongly to the leading inhabitants, both Mussulman and Christian, and that, at present, the district was perfectly quiet, although a Turkish watchman had recently been killed in some gardens by an Armenian.

In general, his Excellency seemed to have no doubt of being able to maintain order in this vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 78.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received August* 17.)

(No. 463.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, August 11, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 458 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches from His Majesty's Acting-Consul at Erzeroum, confirming and extending his telegraphic reports relative to the military operations which the Ottoman authorities are undertaking against the revolutionaries in the Sassoun district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR

Inclosure 1 in No. 78.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 22.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, July 30, 1903.

I REGRET to report that the Vali admitted yesterday that it had been decided to undertake military operations against the Armenian revolutionaries who are said to be collected in the Sassoun Mountains.

It is very difficult here in Erzeroum to learn what is going on in the Mush district; but, as I had the honour to state in my private letter of the 24th instant, it would seem that there are a considerable number of organized revolutionaries (over 1,000 is is said) in the Sassoun Mountains, most of whom have come from abroad in small bands.

What the nature of the military operations to be undertaken may be I cannot say. It is to be hoped that they may be confined to surrounding the Sassoun and Talori districts, and shutting the revolutionaries up there; an easy task, from the nature of the country, and one which would obtain all the necessary results. Any repetition of the cruel measures and destruction of villages which were adopted in 1894 would be most deplorable, and quite without excuse. I cannot repeat too often my conviction that the revolutionaries have absolutely no following among the Armenians in general.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

P.S.—I have instructed Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote to impress on the Vali of Bitlis the danger of any such events as took place in 1894–1895.

C. S. H.

Inclosure 2 in No. 78.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 23.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, July 30, 1903.

In continuation of my immediately preceding despatch, I have the honour to report that active operations will be undertaken against Sassoun by the troops now in the Mush district, with the help of mountain artillery. Remembering the operations of 1894, this sounds very ominous. The Vali himself does not deny the danger of the Kurds getting out of hand, and of disturbances in the plain of Mush and Boulanik; and a battalion of infantry* has already been sent from here to Khinis "to place a limit on possible trouble."

The military operations against Sassoun—where the authorities have, incomprehensibly, allowed revolutionaries from abroad to assemble—should, if they be necessary, be strictly preventive, not punitive. In that case, all may yet end well.

I had the honour to communicate the sense of this, and of my preceding despatch, to your Excellency by telegram last night and this morning. My Russian and French colleagues have telegraphed to their Embassies in a similar sense.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

P.S.—As far as I can learn, the troops in the Mush district amount altogether to nearly a division. They have been drafted from Bitlis, Erzeroum, Van, and Kharput, and are under the command of Salih Pasha, of whom little is known, but who does not seem to inspire great confidence.

C. S. H.

Inclosure 3 in No. 78.

Mr. Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 25.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, August 1, 1903.

I REGRET to report that I learn, as post is leaving, that it is already too late to prevent bloodshed in Sassoun.

* 2nd Battalion of the 25th Regiment.

On the 23rd July the Ottoman troops, assisted by Kurds, having advanced into Sassoun, came in contact with the Armenians near the village of Shenik, and a fight ensued, in which two soldiers, eight Kurds, and two Armenians were killed, and three of the latter wounded. The Armenians have abandoned the villages of Shenik and Semal, and retreated towards Gueliéguzan and the mountains of Talori.

A very serious piece of news is that the authorities have issued rifles to the Kurds, 800 having been given to each of the three tribes—Badikanli, Bekranli, and Hiananli. These are the three nomad tribes at present in the Sassoun district.

I telegraphed this news to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 464.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 11, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 438 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that I again spoke to the Grand Vizier yesterday in the sense of my previous remarks regarding the condition of affairs in the Sassoon district.

His Highness said that the Vali positively denied that arms had been distributed to the three Kurdish tribes whose names I had subsequently given him—viz., the Badekanli, Bekranli, and Hegananli. But as he asked me at the same time to try and ascertain from His Majesty's Consul whether he had proof of his statement, the presumption was that while officially denying the fact, he had doubts as to the veracity of the report made to him by the local authorities.

His Highness did not attempt to palliate the want of energy and incapacity of the Vali of Bitlis, but gave me to understand that so far he had not been able to obtain permission for his removal. He had, however, dismissed the Mutessarif of Moush and replaced him by an efficient official named Reschad Bey. He had also succeeded in removing the Mutessarif of Dersim, although he was brother to Zekki Pasha, the influential and powerful Commandant of the 4th Corps d'Armée. He had also renewed in forcible terms his orders to the Vali of Bitlis and other authorities to take every precaution for the protection of the Christians.

I said that these orders would be fruitless if he allowed Kurds to follow the regular army in their military operations against the revolutionaries. He admitted this, but said that this statement had also been denied by the Vali.

The Russian Ambassador, who had received somewhat similar information to mine from his Consul at Erzeroum, and who had also made representations to the Porte, sent his First Secretary to me a few days ago to ask for such information as I could give him, and to express the hope that I would inform him of any further news I might receive. I told him the substance of Mr. Hampson's reports, and of my representations to the Porte, especially in regard to the arming of Kurdish tribes and allowing others to follow the army, and I expressed the hope that he would speak in the same sense to the Grand Vizier.

I took the opportunity of inquiring whether it was true, as reported to me, that the Russian Consul had gone to Moush. The First Secretary replied that their Consul was at the present moment absent from Bitlis, and that it was therefore impossible to send him to Moush. I suggested that perhaps the Consul at Van, if he was at his post, might be instructed to go there, and that I would be glad to instruct our Vice-Consul to co-operate with him with a view to the security of the Christian inhabitants.

His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis was to leave for Moush on the 10th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 80.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 467.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 12, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 394 of the 13th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to a despatch from the United States' Consul, of which the American Minister has been so good as to give me a copy, the condition of Kharpout is becoming more tranquil.

The appointment of Fuad Bey to be Vali of Kharpout has been cancelled, and Hassan Bey, a member of the Council of State, and recently Mouavin of the Aidin Vilayet, has been named in his place.

There are contradictory accounts of Hassan Bey's character and qualifications, but in any case he will probably be a better official than the late Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 81.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 469.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 12, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 464 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, Military Attaché at this Embassy, reporting a conversation which he has had with the Minister of War relative to the operations against the revolutionaries in Sassoun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 81.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Constantinople, August 11, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I inquired from the War Minister if any military operations were intended against the revolutionary Armenians in Sassoun.

He denied that any considerable movement was in progress beyond the pursuit of some small bands which had crossed the Russian frontier, and had taken refuge in the mountains of Sassoun, the crater of Nimrud Dagh, and other strongholds, and were being dislodged.

Seven battalions of infantry,* two squadrons of cavalry, and three batteries of mountain-guns are either in Mush Plain or Sassoun, and this force is sufficient without calling on any further reinforcements.

I have met Salih Pasha, the Commandant at Bitlis (16th Brigade); he is somewhat fanatical and hostile towards Christians, and has done most of his service in that distant part of the country. One battalion (400 men) has been quartered for the past year in Sassoun, itself at Tabik. Another is at Hazo, on the southern side of the mountains.

I think the project of surrounding the mountains of Sassoun and Talori with a cordon of troops, as mentioned in Mr. Hampson's despatch No. 22 of the 30th July, to be quite impracticable, if the very difficult and mountainous nature of the country and its extent comes to be considered.

I have met the Badikanli, Bekranli, and Khianli Kurds, and they spend the summer every year among the Armenians of Sassoun or grazing their flocks on the adjacent mountains. They are fairly well armed already, although they have not so many rifles as the Hamidie farther north.

* 3,500 men, practically all the 16th Brigade, which has its head-quarters at Mush itself.

I cannot trace that any troops have been moved from Kharpout or Van towards Mush or from Erzeroum, with the exception of one battalion, which has been sent to Khinis probably to intercept Armenian bands on their way from the Russian frontier towards Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel, Military Attaché.*

No. 82.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 236.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 20, 1903.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 421 of the 27th July, forwarding a Report by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the attempts of Nimrod to create difficulties for the newly-appointed Nestorian Patriarch.

I approve your action in drawing the attention of the Porte to this matter, and pointing out the danger and impolicy of alienating the Nestorians.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 83.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 237.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 20, 1903.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 438 of the 4th August, reporting conversations which you have recently had with the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in regard to the condition of Armenia.

I approve the language held by your Excellency as to the necessity for restraining the Kurds and taking all possible measures to prevent a repetition of the events of 1894 and 1895.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 84.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 9.)
My Lord, *Batoum, August* 13, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the evening before last, at 8 o'clock, a murder was committed in one of the principal streets of this town, the victim being an Armenian gentleman named Tarhanianz (Russianized into Tarhanov), who was employed as Manager of a petroleum case-making factory owned by Messrs. Hachatrianz Brothers, also Armenians.

The circumstances which led up to this assassination are stated to be the following:—

Some days ago a young man, of Armenian origin, appeared at the offices of Messrs. Hachatrianz Brothers, and handed a letter to one of the Principals, which contained a request that a sum of 1,500 rupees might be given by the firm in aid of the funds of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, the resources of which Society, it would appear, were at a very low ebb. The letter was handed by the Principal to M. Tarhanov, who, after reading it, expostulated with the young man, and threatened to have him arrested, giving orders to the office boy to call in the police. The boy, however, also an Armenian, returned in about ten minutes, stating he could not find a policeman; thereupon M. Tarhanov telephoned to the police station for an officer, on whose arrival the young man was placed under arrest.

It is stated that M. Tarhanov went still further in the matter, and subsequently took the letter to the Governor of the province, to whom he gave the names of the

persons forming the Committee, and offered to furnish his Excellency with any other information which the authorities might require about the members of the Committee.

Two or three days after this occurrence, M. Tarhanov, as stated above, while walking along the street, was murdered by two Armenians, who attacked him with small daggers, and inflicted several wounds, or, as some people will have it, literally cut him up, and it is generally supposed that the deceased was condemned to death by the Armenian Revolutionary Society. The men who committed the crime were apprehended by the police authorities a few hours after the occurrence, but no information has leaked out as to who they are.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 85.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 482.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 16, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 404 of the 11th instant, respecting the condition of affairs in the Sasun district, I have the honour to report that at an interview with the Grand Vizier which I had on the 13th, I informed His Highness that, in accordance with his request, I had again telegraphed to His Majesty's Acting-Consul at Erzeroum inquiring as to the truth of the grave charges against the local authorities to which I had alluded in my last interview, and that Mr. Hampson had replied that he had no doubt whatever that arms had been distributed to the three Kurdish tribes of the Badikanli, Bekranli, and Hyenanli, and that the evidence was overwhelming of the intention of the local officials to allow the Kurds to follow the army.

I was sure, I said, that His Majesty's Government would have received with satisfaction the news that the Mutessarif of Moush, who was apparently responsible for at all events the latter proposal, had been dismissed and replaced by Rashid Pasha. At the risk, however, of repeating my representations, I again most earnestly impressed upon His Highness the urgent necessity of making the Vali of Bitlis understand that any remissness on his part in the way of taking the necessary measures of restraint would be promptly and severely punished.

His Highness replied that all these orders had been given, and that I might rely on it that the authorities would do all in their power to prevent a massacre of Christian Armenians, and to restore the district as quickly as possible to a state of order.

His Highness at the same time gave me confidentially to understand that if I was able to furnish proofs of the connivance of the Vali of Bitlis in outrages upon the Armenians, or of failing in his duty, he would welcome them as strengthening the request already made by His Highness for the Vali's removal, which had hitherto not been approved.

A telegram has been received from Mr. Heathcote announcing his arrival at Moush on the 12th instant, and a telegram of yesterday, a paraphrase of which I have the honour to inclose, throws doubts on the statement that arms had been distributed to the Moslems.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 85.

Mr. Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Moush, August* 16, 1903.

NO credence is attached here to reported conflict between troops and revolutionaries in Sasun, and to the distribution of arms. It is said that the two gendarmes believed by the Government to have been killed have been captured and held as hostages.

The best information says that there are [groups wanting] Sasun, but only one battalion is to be seen here. The inaction of the troops and revolutionary bands has decreased the apprehension here, which is less than was reported at Bitlis. The distinction between revolutionary and peaceable Armenians does not seem to be sufficiently observed by the Mutessarif of Gueudj.

No. 86.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 485. Confidential.)

Therapia, August 18, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 237 of the 5th May last, I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith, copy of a despatch from the Acting British Vice-Consul at Haifa, relative to the progress of the Haifa-Damascus Railway, and the supposed strategical aims of the Hejaz line.

With regard to the latter question, Mr. Abela reports a rumour that not only is the Hejaz Railway to be diverted to Akaba, but that a branch line is in contemplation from that place to El Arish, on the Mediterranean.

I submitted this report to Colonel Maunsell for his opinion as to the supposed strategical value of the extension to Akaba of the Hejaz Railway, and inclose an interesting Memorandum, in which he deals with this point, and shows that while there may be some doubt whether Akaba belongs to Turkey or to Egypt, it is clear from Lord Cromer's despatch No. 41, Confidential, of the 18th March, 1902 (Confidential print, Egypt, the 31st March, 1902, section 1), that El Arish is well within Egyptian territory.

I learn from Mr. Monahan, that while still at Haifa, in the early part of this year, he heard from a Turkish Colonel of the staff that the Hejaz line would go to Akaba, and that this is confirmed by what he now hears at Damascus.

On the other hand, he informs me that orders were received at Damascus in June last, to continue the survey from Ma'an towards Medain Salih (also called El Hedjer on the maps, and somewhat less than two-thirds of the way from Ma'an to Medina). He considers it tolerably certain that the line will reach Ma'an in about a year.

On the whole, there seems to be little doubt that a branch line from Ma'an to Akaba is contemplated, which would enable Turkish pilgrims to travel to the Holy Cities without passing through the Suez Canal; even before the further extension of the Hejaz Railway, but I am inclined to think that the supposed strategical value, both of the main line and of this branch, is a secondary consideration, and that the Sultan's real object is to mark his reign by affording his Moslem subjects greater facilities for their pilgrimage.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 86.

Acting Vice-Consul Abela to Consul-General Drummond-Hay.

(No. 44.)

Haifa, June 20, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to state that on the 17th instant the Vali of Beyrout arrived in Haifa to inspect the affairs of the Haifa–Damascus Railway. The work on the line is still going on without interruption.

I understand from Dr. Schumacher that Mr. Hills will protest against any infringement upon his rights to the gardens which the Turkish Government intends to make into a station. Dr. Schumacher recommends Mr. Hills to make his protest through the Foreign Office.

I understand also from Dr. Schumacher that the Hejaz line is a pure strategical one. He does not believe that the line will ever reach Mecca. It is only intended to reach "Akabah." He adds that efforts are now being made to bring, before next September, the Damascus–Mecca line to "Kutraná," and thence it will be stretched to "Kalhat-el-Akabah." Another line is also intended to be built from "El-Arish" to "Akabah." Dr. Schumacher says that instructions have been given to three German

engineers to study the intended line between "El-Arish" and "Akaba," and that the intended line between "Katrané" and "Akabah" has been already studied.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. ABELA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 86.

Memorandum by Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell.

REFERRING to the statement in Mr. Vice-Consul Abela's despatch, No. 44 of the 20th June, that the Hejaz Railway is a purely strategical line, and only intended to be completed as far as Akaba, I would venture the following remarks:—

From the point of view of British interests the construction of a railway connecting Syria with Akaba would not be of such strategical importance as might at first be supposed.

It is true that by its means troops might be massed at Akaba for an attack on the Egyptian territory of the Sinai peninsula, or even for an advance through that country (by the Egyptian pilgrim route) on Lower Egypt itself.

But the Port of Akaba would always be at the mercy of the British Fleet in the Red Sea, the country round it and the Sinai peninsula is extremely barren and ill-suited for supporting an army which would be dependent on Syria for its supplies, while the principal base at Akaba would always be subject to an attack by a British Fleet. But, notwithstanding this, the fact of a railway having reached Akaba would have a considerable effect in increasing Turkish influence in those districts, and might lead to interference in our sphere in the Sinaitic peninsula. A port at Akaba would permit of Turkish troops being embarked thence for Red Sea ports, Hejaz and Yemen, avoiding the Suez Canal and saving the canal dues paid in passing through.

In Lord Cromer's letter No. 41, of the 18th March, 1902, the terminal point of the Egyptian frontier in this direction is mentioned as Akaba, but it is not clearly stated whether this includes the old fort and village of Akaba.

If this is not already done the simplest solution of the question would be to extend the frontier line so as to include Akaba in Egyptian territory. The Turks do not appear to have any Mudir or Government in the place. As regards the proposed line from El Arish to Akaba, it is quite clear from the letter of Lord Cromer's quoted above that El Arish is well within Egyptian territory, as the frontier post of the Rafeh, definitely marked by pillars, is some distance along the coast to the north-east of it. As stated in that letter the true frontier of Egypt was regarded as the route Rafeh-el-Wejh-El Muelah Naki Akaba–Akaba, but for the moment it was not intended to extend authority further than the line Rafeh–El Gurieh–El Makdaba–Makdaba–Jebel-el-Helal–El Munbat–Akaba. In either case the trace of the proposed line would enter Egyptian territory near El Arish, and probably for most of its length (its exact trace is not given). It is difficult to see what commercial value such a line would be to anyone, as the country is almost barren and produces little.

There is no port at El Arish, and it would be practically impossible to make one on such an open coast, and apparently there would be no connection with any other proposed line through El Arish.

The proposal to survey a route from El Arish to Akaba may possibly be an attempt on the part of the Turks to raise the question of the exact frontier with Egypt at that point. From the military point of view, when Akaba is connected by rail with Syria, the branch to El Arish would be strategically of some value to the Turks, as by it troops could be massed at Akaba and El Arish, from both of which points routes of invasion lead towards Egypt, but, as stated above, the Akaba route could be attacked by a fleet in the Gulf of Akaba, while that through El Arish would similarly be open to naval action in the Mediterranean.

(Signed) J. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

Constantinople, July 9, 1903.

No. 87.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 487.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 18, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 438 of the 4th instant respecting affairs in Sassoun, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis on the subject.

Mr. Heathcote does not take such an alarmist view as His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, but he still considers the situation attended with evident uncertainty and risk.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 87.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Bitlis, August 4, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on my return from the Melazgird district on the 31st ultimo I found that alarming rumours had been lately reaching Bitlis regarding the state of affairs in Sassoun.

The few Christians who have recently arrived here from Mush appear convinced that the revolutionaries have been gathering in strength in Sassoun, intending to strike some blow in the near future, and they fear that if this blow should take the form of an attack on the town of Mush, as they anticipate, it would be avenged by massacre. This fear seems to be general among the Armenians, both those of Mush and those who, living here, are in communication with them, and it is said that many persons have lately fled from Mush to Erzeroum and elsewhere.

I am assured that all the roads leading into Sassoun are so closely guarded by troops as to amount to a siege of the province, and that hardly any one is allowed to go in or out.

Communications in this district are at all times so uncertain that it is extremely difficult to know what is occurring at a distance of a few miles, and the secrecy maintained, not only by the revolutionaries, but also by the authorities, encourages the alarmist tendencies of the Armenian population.

The Vali, who remained in the Melazgird district from the middle of May until after my arrival there, only came back to Bitlis on the 22nd ultimo; when I saw him on the 1st instant, immediately after my return, he professed to anticipate no serious disturbance in Sassoun; he stated that, as has been customary in recent years, three companies of soldiers were stationed in the district during the summer months near the camping ground of the nomad Kurds of the Behirânli tribe to keep order between them and the inhabitants, adding that this year he had also sent up sixty gendarmes for the same purpose. He estimated the number of revolutionaries who have collected in Sassoun from Russia and elsewhere at 80 to 100 well-armed men.

The Armenians, on the other hand, believe that the numbers on both sides are much greater; they consider the revolutionaries from outside to be at least 300, not counting the assistance they would find in the province, and the number of troops in the district to amount to several battalions, as they assert positively that the garrison of Mush has been reduced to some 200 men, that soldiers have also been sent from Guendj, Hazo, and the various villages where they were quartered, and that others have come from Diarbekir.

They also declare that the two recent visits of the Commandant of Gendarmerie, officially attributed to tribal disputes among the Kurds, were made in order to persuade the latter to come into the district, which, it is said, they were at first unwilling to do, and they evidently think that the expected conflict between the troops and the revolutionaries will be accompanied by excesses on the part of the Kurds.

The Armenian Bishop-Elect, who only arrived some three weeks ago from Kharput, and can hardly be fully acquainted yet with the affairs of this neighbourhood, is of opinion that the outside revolutionaries must amount to some 300, but that the number of troops on the spot is probably not in excess of the Vali's statement, and he fears that such a force will be inadequate to cope with the revolutionaries. He holds that the only possible chance of peace is that they should be induced to leave the province, and is convinced that their determination to provoke atrocities and so to compel foreign intervention is hopeless.

The Vali, in a later conversation, repeated the declarations reported above; but when I insisted that some military movement was or had been in contemplation, as shown by statements made by the Vali of Erzeroum, he admitted that an Iradé had been issued for the doubling of the garrison of Mush and its district. The Mushir had asked his opinion as to the necessity of this, saying that to carry out the order a new enrolment of troops would be required, and he had replied that he saw no urgent need for such a permanent addition, as the existing garrison of six battalions of infantry, with a small force of cavalry and artillery, would be sufficient for the present, and reinforcements could soon arrive in case of any attack. The proposal had accordingly been abandoned, and he stated positively that no military movement was at present contemplated.

Husni Bey spoke as if he were fully alive to the difficulties of the situation, both the danger that if the troops were to attack the revolutionaries during the stay of the nomad Kurds, the latter would soon be beyond control, and the necessity, in the interests of the Empire, of distinguishing carefully between the few revolutionaries and the large peaceable Armenian population; but he admitted that if the revolutionaries were to make the attack, the maintenance of order generally would become very difficult.

Having only seen his Excellency three times, I am not in a position to judge whether these views would be borne out by his acts; but from what I hear of him, it would seem doubtful if he would have the resolution to deal with a serious emergency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

No. 88.

Sir C. Phipps to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 98.)
My Lord, *Brussels, August 22, 1903.*

I REFERRED, in conversation with Baron Lambermont yesterday, to two matters affecting the affairs of China to which allusion had also been made in the Belgian Parliament.

In regard to the surrender of the six journalists at Shanghae, his Excellency remarked that whatever might be the rights of the case or Treaty responsibility they should, under the special circumstances at issue, not be given up. The last telegraphic news received from the Belgian Minister had merely stated that all danger to those persons was at an end.

As to the export of arms to China, he considered that the temporary measures enjoined in 1900 were no longer requisite. The production of arms, &c., in China itself was susceptible of great development, and he considered that the prohibition might have resulted in an impetus being given to internal production which would be far more dangerous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CONSTANTINE PHIPPS.

No. 89.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 27.)

(No. 154.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 27, 1903.*

I LEARN that the American Vice-Consul at Beyrout was assassinated on the evening of the 22nd.

No. 90.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 31.)

(No. 158.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 30, 1903.*

THE American Vice-Consul at Beyrout seems to have been fired at, but not killed, as reported in my telegram No. 155; but the story is denied *in toto* by the Ottoman authorities.

If it is true, as reported by a press telegram, that the American fleet is under orders for Beyrout, I believe it is less in direct connection with the Beyrout incident than as a mark of dissatisfaction at the treatment accorded to several legitimate demands recently made.

No. 91.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 31.)

(No. 159.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 31, 1903.*

I LEARN from United States' Minister that American warships will arrive on Friday at Beyrout, and that I was correct as to the reasons for this step given in my immediately preceding telegram.

No. 92.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 523.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 28, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 155 of yesterday, in which I reported the news communicated to me by the United States' Minister of the murder of the American Vice-Consul at Beirout, I have the honour to report that from later intelligence received by Mr. Leishman it appears that the matter had been misrepresented, and that though the Vice-Consul had been shot at, the bullet had fortunately missed him and he had escaped unhurt. The man who fired at him is unknown, but every effort is being made to find him, and the event is not attributed to any political motive.

In this connection I may mention that about a month ago I received a despatch from the Acting British Consul-General at Beirout, dwelling on the growth of disorder and lawlessness amongst the lower strata of the Mussulman population of that town and the incapacity or the unwillingness of the Vali to assure the safety of law-abiding citizens.

I lost no time in bringing the conduct of this official to the notice of the Grand Vizier, who thanked me for having mentioned the subject, but at the same time begged me not to press it at the moment, as though he himself was anxious to get rid of the Vali yet he must for various reasons await the report of a Special Commission, which had been sent to Syria to investigate the charges against Reshid Bey and to inquire into other matters of a similar nature.

I have received to-day a despatch, copy of which is inclosed, from Mr. Richards, reporting the arrival of the Commission, whose scope of inquiry seems to be of considerable extent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 92.

Mr. Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 101.)
Sir, *Beirout, August 21, 1903.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report the arrival here from Constantinople on the 17th instant of a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of Ali Danish Bey, President of the Criminal Section in the Council of State (Shoura-i-Devlet), Mausour Bey Shetwan, an employé in the Treasury (Malié), and a small staff. I understand from Ali Danish Bey, with whom I have had two interviews, that as soon as their inquiry into the state of things in general in this vilayet has been brought to a conclusion he and his colleague will proceed to the Sandjak of Jerusalem and subsequently to the Vilayet of Damascus, in both of which provinces they will hold a similar inquiry to that in which they are now engaged here. It would appear that the scope of their investigations will be practically unlimited, indeed so much so that it is a matter of astonishment how any two persons, be their qualifications and capacity for hard work what they may, can possibly bring to a satisfactory termination within a reasonable time so gigantic a task as that which has been imposed upon them.

I have impressed upon Ali Danish Bey the urgent necessity for the adoption of the most drastic possible measures to insure the security of life and property in this city, and I can see that he is fully alive to the abnormal state of things in that respect. In order to make this impression the more vivid I related to him a very significant little incident, which has quite recently been reported to me by a most trustworthy person who witnessed the scene himself. A Christian intending emigrant was being ill-treated by some Moslem roughs in the Place des Canons, the chief square of this city, in which the Government House is situated, when a Maronite priest, who was standing near, declared that he would go and complain of their brutality to the Government. Thereupon the Moslems retorted, with a jeering laugh: "Go to the Government; it is we who are the Government; the Government is like our shoes."

I am also assured that the language openly used with reference to the Vali, his wife, &c., by disappointed petitioners and others in the court-yard of the Government House ("Serai") itself is frequently too shocking for repetition.

The fact is Reshid Bey's close connection with all the smugglers, robbers, bravos, and the rest of the scum of the city is so well known that now, even if he wished to exercise his authority and cleanse this Augean stable, it is very doubtful whether he could do so. As Ali Danish Bey said to me, it wants a hand of iron now to rule these rogues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 93.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 162.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 7, 1903.*

I HAVE just heard that after the arrival of the American fleet at Beyrout, as reported in my telegram No. 159, and while the Vali was calling on the Commodore, an employé of the American School of Medicine was fired at and wounded by a Mussulman, and further that an Orthodox Church has been attacked and many Christians murdered. The American Commodore is said to intend to land marines for the protection of American schools and the Consulate.

His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout has not as yet confirmed these reports.

No. 94.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 8.)

(No. 164.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September* 7, 1903.

THE reports of loss of life and of general insecurity at Beyrout given in my telegram No. 162 have now been confirmed by Mr. Richards, who adds that he regards the situation as serious, Moslem fanaticism being very excited.

The Consular Body have asked that men be landed from the American squadron for the protection of Europeans in case of necessity, and the Commodore has promised to do so.

The Porte has received news that public security is no longer in danger, and that order has been re-established.

(Confidential.)

Although the French Ambassador has said nothing about asking for the dispatch of the fleet to Beyrout, I can see he is watching the situation very closely, and his remarks lead me to think he would not be sorry to do so, no doubt with the idea that it would neutralize the influence recently acquired in Syria by Russia.

No. 95.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 8.)

(No. 165.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September* 8, 1903.

MR. RICHARDS reports an improvement in the general situation at Beyrout, but that panic still continues in consequence of events reported in my telegram No. 164, and that there is an exodus of Christians to the hills.

I learnt from the Grand Vizier yesterday that he was strongly urging the transfer to Beyrout as acting Vali of the Governor of Damascus, and Mr. Richards reports that the appointment is shortly expected.

No. 96.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 9.)

(No. 107. Commercial.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 31, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a Report on the general commercial situation in Asia Minor as affected by the nationality of the owners of the railways, which has been drawn up by Mr. Vice-Consul Waugh in obedience to the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 89, Commercial, of the 6th June last.

Mr. Waugh has been in consultation with the Commercial Attaché to this Embassy while compiling this Report, but I think it better to reserve for a more propitious moment any observations I may have to make on the same subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 96.

Report on the General Commercial Situation in Asia Minor, as affected by the Nationality of the Owners of the Railways.

IN an examination of "the general commercial situation in Asia Minor, as affected by the nationality of the owners of the railways," the existing lines to be taken into consideration, leaving out the Syrian railways, are:—

1. Anatolian Railway, from Haïdar Pasha (Constantinople) to Angora and Konia, 1,032 kilom. in length, which is German.

2. The Smyrna–Aidin Railway, 515 kilom. in length, which is English.

3. The Smyrna–Cassaba Railway, 517 kilom. in length, which was English, but is now in French hands.

The position of these lines is shown on the map annexed.

Besides these three big railways, there only exist in Asia Minor at present the relatively unimportant Mudania–Brusa (41 kilom.) and Mersina–Adana (67 kilom.) lines.

The most obvious possibility of influence to be exercised by a foreign-owned railway in Turkey on its own national trade is the purchase of railway material and employment of labour from the home country.

A more permanent and important influence may be exercised by favouring the transport over the line of the imports, or by stimulating in other ways the trade of the home country.

A third form of influence would be special opportunity and encouragement afforded for the investment of home capital in remunerative enterprises in the country traversed by the railway.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna has kindly made inquiries with regard to the two Smyrna Railway Companies. The information obtained is as follows:—

In placing orders for railway material both Companies give the preference to materials from their own countries, when prices are comparable with those of foreign manufacturers. These orders amounted for the Aidin Railway to an average of 24,000*l.* for the four years 1898–1901, and to the sum of 42,000*l.* in the year 1902. From 11,000*l.* to 16,000*l.* of this in each year was for coal. Only about 2,000*l.* was in any year spent outside the United Kingdom.

The Smyrna–Cassaba line imports annually from 7,000 to 8,000 tons of coal, principally from Cardiff. Otherwise its annual purchases during the last five years have amounted to from 60,000 fr. to 80,000 fr. imported, and about the same amount purchased locally. The countries which benefit by these purchases were, in order of importance, France, Belgium, England, and Austria. In 1900 three locomotives were imported from Austria.

Both Companies give a decided preference to their respective countrymen for employment, especially in the higher and more responsible posts. When the Smyrna–Cassaba line changed hands some years ago, the British subjects were gradually got rid of, and now, out of some two dozen, only two or three remain.

Neither Company has any arrangements whatever with any steam-ship or other Company for through rates over its line on through bills of lading to towns in the interior.

The Smyrna–Cassaba line is bound by its Conventions with the Ottoman Government not to enter into any special contract in favour of any foreign flag, and any facilities it gives are of a general character, and accorded to trade of all nationalities.

The Smyrna–Aidin Company is in the same position, with the one exception that it has, since June last, made a private agreement with a local British importer of agricultural machinery for special facilities of transport and warehousing, by which it is hoped that the sale of British agricultural machinery and implements will be materially assisted. His Majesty's Consul-General is anxious that the above information should be treated as confidential, and particularly the last paragraph.

In the case of the Anatolian Railway, the material has been mainly bought in Germany and brought out by the German Levant Steam-ship Company's boats.

Preferential rates over the Anatolian Railway are forbidden by the following Articles in the "cahier des charges," which are repeated in the "cahier des charges" of the Bagdad Railway:—

"Art. 24. Tous les tarifs, qu'ils soient généraux, spéciaux, ou proportionnels ou différentiels, sont applicables à tous les voyageurs et expéditeurs sans distinction. En outre, ces tarifs, avant d'être appliqués, seront soumis à l'approbation du Gouvernement Impérial. En cas d'urgence ces tarifs pourront être appliqués en les notifiant au Commissaire Impérial avant l'approbation par le Gouvernement Impérial.

"Art. 25. Il est formellement interdit au concessionnaire de passer tout Traité particulier ayant pour objet d'accorder des réductions des prix indiqués dans les Tarifs. Toutefois cette interdiction ne s'applique pas aux Traités à passer avec le Gouvernement Impérial. Les pauvres et indigents seront transportés à moitié du Tarif."

It is, however, conceivable that this prohibition might be evaded.

Careful inquiries made at Hamburg and here fail to show that any arrangement to favour German trade exists at present; and His Majesty's Consul-General writes that "nothing is contemplated at present in Hamburg in this direction." This may be due to the fact that the Anatolian Railway does not pass through any important distributing centres, and that the import trade to that part of Asia Minor is not yet sufficiently developed to make it worth while to cater for through traffic into the interior.

The main stream of the import trade is arrested by the custom-house barriers on the coast, and there broken up.

But it does not follow that such will be always the case; and the possibilities of future developments in this direction will be dealt with below in examining the Bagdad Railway scheme.

The Anatolian Railway has a well-organized commercial department, which works up the export traffic by encouraging the peasants to send their produce to the railway from the largest possible area round, and by keeping in stock and supplying to the peasants agricultural implements and machinery. These last are chiefly of German make; but it must be admitted that Germany supplies articles more suited to this country than we do; and two British firms of agents established here, finding it useless to try to sell English ploughs, are looking out for German manufacturers to represent. How far German import trade has been stimulated in other ways along the Anatolian Railway by the spread of German ideas, the influence of German station-masters and railway officials, and the more frequent visits of German commercial travellers, it is impossible to measure. But the result achieved in the last ten years, since the line was opened to Angora, does not seem very considerable.

The general effect of the opening of the railway has been much more important on the development of the export trade of the districts traversed than on that of the import trade. Whereas before the opening of the railway to Angora there was no export of grain, the annual export from Ismidt is now from 1,500,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* of wheat and barley.

This is pure gain to the country; and it might be expected that the money thus brought in would be spent in an increased import trade. This is not the case. The Anatolian peasant is thrifty, and does not increase his scale of expenditure readily But export merchants find that the "holding power" of the population has much increased; and instead of being compelled each year to sell their stocks of mohair, &c., and to live from hand to mouth, they are now able to put by money and to hold on to their stock and sell when the market suits them.

As for the export trade of these districts, it is not in German hands. I am told that no German firm has, so far, obtained a footing in it.

The biggest customer of the railway is a British firm which exports grain, mohair, and minerals to Germany as well as England. This firm is not of opinion that any preference is shown by the Railway Company to German customers, except such facilities as might be granted exceptionally by the railway officials out of private friendship. What it does complain of is the system of kilometric guarantee which renders the Company independent of, and indifferent to, its customers. The Company frankly admitted as much on one occasion, when complaints were made of insufficient rolling-stock to deal with the transport of an exceptionally good harvest: "If we were dependent on our customers for our receipts, we should come to you hat in hand."

With regard to the third form of influence, I am not aware that the opening of the Anatolian Railway has led to the investment of German capital in any enterprise in the Angora and Konia districts.

To sum up, it does not appear that the German ownership of the Anatolian Railway can be shown to have directly affected Germany's commercial position in Asia Minor during the last ten years, except as regards the amount of German railway material employed in the construction and working of the line.

Thus far I have endeavoured to examine the influence exercised on the commercial situation by the nationality of the railways actually open in Asia Minor, and have been dealing with facts so far as it is possible to ascertain them.

To extend this examination to the probable effect of the realization of the Bagdad Railway Concession is to plunge into conjectures.

First let us consider the general effect of the railway on the trade of Asia Minor, and then the particular effect of the nationality of the owners of the railway.

We have seen that the opening of the Anatolian Railway has resulted in an annual export of some two millions worth of grain, which was previously not exported and presumably not produced.

No statistics are procurable of the amount of land under cultivation before and since the railway was opened to Angora and Konia, which would afford a conclusive test of how far the railway has increased the production of the country.

The tithes of the districts traversed by the line have been of late years collected by the International Public Debt Administration, and the figures published should throw some light on the question.

The sandjaks directly traversed by the railway are those of Ismidt, Ertoghrul, Angora, Kutahia, Karahissar, while the sandjaks of Yozgat, Kirshehr, and Cæsarea, although not on the railway, are sufficiently near to benefit by the increased facility of transport.

The President of the Public Debt Administration, in an interesting Report, dated last January, shows from the figures that the tithes of the districts traversed or affected by the railway have increased in the last twelve years by 46·1 per cent.

Exception has been taken to this calculation, based on triennial averages; and it has been suggested that the improvement in the tithes, being spasmodic rather than gradual and regular, is due to accidents of weather and fluctuation of prices more than to increased area of cultivation.

The series of years under observation is not long enough to warrant a decided opinion on this point. The opinion of local export merchants who have known the country before and since the railway is that the production of the country traversed by the Anatolian Railway has enormously increased. They say that the railway has attracted a large population of immigrants from Bulgaria and Russia, who have settled in the most fertile parts.

These Moslem emigrants from Roumelia and Russia are a hard-working and intelligent population, accustomed to more civilized methods of cultivation than the Anatolian peasantry.

Population, improved communications, and security are the requirements for the development of Asia Minor. The railway attracts the one and creates the others. All agree that the country is much safer along the railway than it was before. It would be surprising, therefore, if the production of the country had not increased; and, as proof that it has, my informants point to the large grain export from Ismidt, which is entirely the growth of recent years. They add that the same result may be expected from the extension of the railway beyond Konia so far as the Taurus Mountains as soon as the population has had time to realize the increased facilities for transport afforded by the line. This would probably take several years.

The German Commission, sent in 1899 to examine the country and the prospects of the Bagdad Railway, estimated that only 10 per cent. of the cultivable country between Konia and Eregli was then under cultivation, and to increase this only required improved communication and inexpensive irrigation. Continuing beyond the Taurus range, the Commission reported of the Adana Vilayet that, in spite of the natural advantages of fertility and proximity to the sea, the country was not strikingly prosperous, and required more population.

The insufficiency of population as hindering development is noted all through the Commission's journey. In Lower Mesopotamia the Commission estimates the settled population at only four per square kilometre. I have heard it stated on fairly good authority that the purely Turkish population of Asia Minor is rapidly decreasing from disease and other causes. Reliable statistics are wanting.

Turkey possesses a certain reserve force in the constant stream of Moslem emigration from Bulgaria and Russia, which has already done good service along the Anatolian Railway, and might help to start a new development along the northern section of the Bagdad Railway as far as the Euphrates.

It would be interesting to obtain statistics of this immigration; but the Commission at the Sublime Porte which deals with the immigrants publishes no results.

In Mesopotamia no northern agricultural population could live, and it is hard to see where fresh population is to be found.

The Turkish Government is strongly opposed to any alien colonization; and, under the present régime, would never entertain Sir W. Willcocks' idea of an immigration from India or Egypt ("The Re-Creation of Chaldea," p. 16); and the only hope seems to be that the nomad Arab and Kurdish tribes may gradually be induced, by the civilizing influence of the railway, to settle down to agricultural pursuits and to increase and multiply.

Weak administration is another serious obstacle to progress. The insecurity of life and property was found by the German Commission to be at its worst in the Diarbekr Vilayet, and to extend all through Mesopotamia. An improvement in this respect may

fairly be hoped to follow the opening of the railway; not all at once, but gradually. Absence of irrigation works is also dwelt on by the Commission. Irrigation on a big scale means the investment of a large foreign capital. The German Commission does not venture to pronounce a decided opinion on the practicability of the re-development of Mesopotamia as a large grain-producing country; but, while remarking the immense possibilities for agriculture, adds that it has been estimated that it would require several generations of labour to regularize the course of the rivers, even if it is not now too late to repair the havoc wrought by centuries of neglect.

The irrigation expert, Sir W. Willcocks, in his pamphlet "The Restoration of the Ancient Irrigation Works on the Tigris; or, the Re-Creation of Chaldea" (Cairo, 1903), estimates (page 18) that for an outlay of 8,000,000*l.*, 1,280,000 acres of the most valuable land at the beginning of the delta of the Tigris near Bagdad might be reclaimed, and that for another outlay of 13,000,000*l.*, 1,500,000 acres in Lower Chaldea could be restored to cultivation.

This is a rough preliminary estimate, based on his Egyptian experience. It would require a thorough hydraulic survey of the country to establish the real cost, and for this he estimates an expenditure of 50,000*l.* and two years' work.

"It would," he says, "be an irreparable mistake if the railways were aligned and constructed independently of the irrigation canals; and if, by some ill-chance, the railways traversed one part of the delta, and the profitably irrigable part of the delta were to be elsewhere."

The most sober study of the prospects of the Bagdad Railway from the German point of view is "Die Bagdadbahn," by Dr. Rohrbach (Berlin, 1902). He distinguishes on the map between the country where the rainfall suffices for grain cultivation—which he brings down as far south as the Sinjar Mountains—and that lying further south, where irrigation is indispensable. He puts the cost of the 700 kilom. of canals as required at only 30,000,000 marks.

Apart from the agricultural possibilities, the only other wealth to be hoped for is mineral. Here, again, the prospects are quite vague. The German Commission, in the course of its six months' survey, was unable to obtain any exact information on the subject.

Naphtha is found between the Persian frontier and Hit on the Euphrates, and great hopes are entertained that this may prove a field of immense importance.

Dr. Rohrbach (page 27) even speaks of the danger for German interests of other foreigners obtaining the Concession. English prospectors have spent some 70,000*l.* in boring across the Persian frontier, but so far without success.

If no serious development of the country is to follow the opening of the line, it will remain a mere strategic railway, for which the Turkish Government will have to pay heavily.

The Government is to issue for each kilometre bonds for 269,110 fr. 65 c., on which it has to pay interest and sinking fund at the rate of 4·087538 per cent.; and in addition a sum of 4,500 fr. per kilom. is to be paid by the Government to the Company for working expenses (Article XXXV of the Bagdad Railway Convention). Taking the length of the line as 2,400 kilom., and the average gross receipts of the line under existing conditions as sufficient to cover the working expenses (the German Commission's estimate of the gross receipts is less), this leaves an annual charge of over 32,000,000 fr. on the Turkish Government.

Such an additional burden on the resources of the country would surely rather cripple than encourage trade.

It has often been pointed out that, from a commercial point of view, the railways required in Asia Minor are narrow gauge lines from the coast to open up the interior. The engineer von Pressel, in his pamphlet "Les Chemins de fer en Turquie d'Asie" (Zurich, 1902), argues strongly in favour of the narrow gauge; and he is supported by Mr. Alexis Rey, who, in his annual statistics of the traffic receipts of railways in Turkey, remarks:—

"An important conclusion may be drawn from these results, *i.e.*, that, except for the lines radiating from Smyrna, the gross receipts scarcely ever reach 9,000 fr. per kilom. When they have to compete with sea-borne transport, or when they penetrate deeper into the interior, their receipts drop to about 3,000 fr.

"This condition of traffic on our lines will certainly improve, but it is well to point it out, with a view to its being taken into consideration in planning new lines. It may be said that in most cases excellent results would be obtained, quite adequate to the requirements of the country, and at very small cost, with the narrow gauge, 1 metre for instance."

If the development of the country had been the main object in view, a series of light railways, such as one from Sivas to Samsoun, would undoubtedly have paid better; but strategic reasons carried the day.

To sum up the probable effect of the Bagdad Railway on the general commercial situation of Asiatic Turkey, it appears that the agricultural development of the country depends on a large investment of foreign capital in irrigation works, and on the establishment of security and the attraction of fresh population by the Turkish Government. No one acquainted with the country can expect these conditions to be realized within a generation; but stranger things have happened, and Turkey may, even within our time, come to possess an intelligent Government. Without agricultural or mining development on a large scale, the railway can only be a drain on the resources of the country.

Coming, now, to the essential point of this Report, the question at issue is, How far would German trade in Asiatic Turkey profit by an exclusively German control of the Bagdad Railway?

All railways in Turkey are nominally Turkish Companies; and we have seen that, in the case of the existing lines, it matters little, except as regards the purchase of railway material, in what country in Europe the shares and debentures may be held.

But in spite of the international character it has been sought to give it, "die Bagdadbahn" is essentially a German scheme. It has been persistently and patiently pursued by the Germans, in spite of the very unfavourable Report of their own Commission; and it has come to possess the same alliterative attractions for German writers as the Cape to Cairo Railway does for British. The one is the pet scheme of the German Emperor, as the other was of Mr. Rhodes. Besides the sale of German railway material, the employment of German engineers and railway staff, and the spread of German ideas and influence among the native population, the Bagdad Railway Concession carries with it peculiar privileges.

Article IX of the Convention gives the Company certain limited rights of navigation on the Tigris, Euphrates, and Shat Elarab.

Article XIII allows the establishment of brick-fields and tile factories.

Article XXII gives mining rights over a zone extending 20 kilom. each side of the line.

Article XXIII allows the construction at Bagdad, Basra, and on the Persian Gulf of ports and quays, with all apparatus for loading and warehousing.

Article XXIV allows the establishment of warehouses anywhere along the line.

Article XXV grants the free use of all water power for electricity.

These privileges in the hands of a powerful railway company, backed by an energetic Foreign Office, may in the future become very valuable.

But the grand idea at the bottom of the German hopes seems to be the development through German capital of Mesopotamia, and the creation of a new source of supply of grain and cotton, which will render Germany independent of America. In return for these raw products Germany will secure a market for her own manufactures. Dr. Rohrbach, who dwells on this theme, quotes the Russian success in cotton planting in Turkestan, to show what may be done by the Germans in Turkey.

With regard to the market for German manufactures, he says (p. 26):—

"In Turkey there cannot yet be any question of such tendencies as those which govern the political economy of America; and it is a matter of course that, if the country is opened up through German capital, German industry will know how to secure for itself the preference in supplying necessaries there."

The prosperity pictured by Dr. Rohrbach may appear Utopian to those who know Turkey to-day. But in forecasting the possibilities of an enterprise like this, it is well to look ahead of the immediate future, and to allow some play of the imagination.

That "Turkey does not change" has been laid down as an axiom; but who can say that another generation may not bring about a revolution in favour of modern development? In that case the owners of the Bagdad Railway Concession may find themselves masters of the situation. Dr. Rohrbach recognizes this.

He says (p. 15):—

"If Turkey were doomed to linger on in weakness, a ready prey to her powerful neighbour whenever it might suit the latter to close with her, then it would be hardly justifiable to risk big German interests and capital in an undertaking like the Bagdad Railway. But the situation is quite different if the Turkish Empire, through the carrying out of this undertaking, is enabled out of her own resources to strengthen and consolidate herself politically. Only in that case can we venture to risk hundreds of millions on building the railway and other hundreds on the development of the country traversed by

the railway. Only a strong Turkey could insure to us the realization of the great prospects which the lands of the Tigris and Euphrates offer to us.

"For a weak Turkey not a pfennig; for a strong Turkey all the money that can be required."

He proceeds to point out that, if Germany misses her chance, other countries will seize it; but that Germany cannot expect to do the work alone without the assistance of foreign capital.

In spite of all self-denying articles in the Conventions, it would probably be easy for a combination of the German Anatolian Railway, the German Haidar Pasha Quay Company, the German Levant Steam-ship Company, and possibly a German-Oriental Railway Company, to arrange such a system of freights from Germany as would give German imports into Asia Minor an advantage over ours.

That this has not yet been done is no guarantee for the future. The country tapped by the Anatolian Railway is not at present a very important market for imports. The Turkish custom-house returns for 1898 divide the total imports from the United Kingdom among the principal custom-houses of the Turkish Empire as follows:—

	£
Constantinople	2,462,000
Smyrna	1,126,000
Beyrout	1,340,000
Salonica	587,000
Bagdad	661,000
Alexandretta	568,000
Trebizond	432,000
Yemen	388,000
Jeddah	557,000

Of the two and a-half millions of British goods brought to Constantinople, a very small fraction probably finds its way into the interior over the Anatolian Railway. But the creation of new markets by the railway would alter this; and it is unlikely that the organizing spirit which framed the very ingenious Tariff of the "Deutscher Levante-Verkehr" (frequently noticed in Trade Reports from Hamburg and Constantinople) would not take advantage of the opportunity offered by an all German route to the interior of Asia Minor. This is the view held by British merchants resident here; and the British Chamber of Commerce in Constantinople passed a unanimous resolution in favour of British co-operation in the railway, on such terms as would insure equal treatment and an efficient control.

A peculiar feature in the constitution of the Bagdad Railway Company is the small share capital of 15,000,000 fr. as compared with the large debenture capital of over 600,000,000 fr.

The control of the railway, as well as any profits from future developments, is vested in the shareholders, while the debenture holders, who really build the railway, get merely their 4 per cent. and sinking fund.

It would be undesirable that British capital should be induced to subscribe to these debentures, without fair representation on the Board.

The conclusions to be drawn from the above considerations seem to be:—

1. That the nationality of the existing railways in Asia Minor has not influenced the commercial situation.

2. That the Bagdad Railway scheme is on a different footing from ordinary railways.

3. That the general effect of the Bagdad Railway on the commercial situation will depend on the attitude of the Turkish Government, and on whether foreign capital is attracted to develop the country.

4. That in the event of the development of the country, the Bagdad Railway in German hands might be made a powerful instrument for furthering German commerce to the detriment of its rivals.

5. That it would be in the interests of British trade and commerce to secure a fair representation on the Board of the Bagdad Railway.

(Signed) A. T. WAUGH.

Constantinople, August 3, 1903.

No. 97.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 9.)

(No. 529.)

My Lord, *Therapia, September* 3, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 487 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote, reporting that the situation at Sasun and Moush appears to be comparatively quiet.

I have, however, called the attention of the Porte to the attitude of the Mutessarif of Guendj, which Mr. Heathcote considers to be an element of danger, and I have suggested that a stronger man should be appointed there. The Minister for Foreign Affairs promised to consider the matter with the Grand Vizier.

A copy of a reassuring despatch on the same subject from the British Acting Consul at Erzeroum is also inclosed.

In view of the improved state of affairs, I have authorized Mr. Heathcote to return from Moush to Bitlis if he is satisfied with the prospect of tranquillity, and I have received a telegram from him stating that he proposed to start yesterday.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 97.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)

Sir, *Moush, August* 19, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I left Bitlis on the 10th instant, arriving at Moush the following day.

It is clear that the people are afraid of exciting suspicion by communicating with me, but from what I can hear I am convinced that exaggerated rumours have been circulated with regard to affairs here.

No one in Moush seems to believe the reports of fighting having taken place between the troops and the revolutionaries, though it is agreed that the latter were at one time present in some force near Shenik, but have now withdrawn further into the mountains, possibly towards Gueliguzan.

They captured two gendarmes two or three weeks ago, and it is generally believed that these men are detained as hostages, to be restored if certain demands of their captors are complied with, though the authorities, as the Vali informed me before I left Bitlis, are making inquiries, but expect to learn that the gendarmes have been killed.

Moush would appear to be in a more or less normal state now, except that communications with Sasun are difficult, few persons being allowed to pass either way. Great alarm was felt on the first news that the revolutionaries were assembling in Sasun, but now that some time has passed without any important action being taken on either side, the hope that the season may after all pass quietly is gaining ground.

Some confidence exists that the Government desires tranquillity, and that the Kurds, who without special encouragement are not likely to go beyond their habitual robberies and individual crimes, will not be set in motion this year against the Armenians collectively; and though it is clear that they are much more numerous in Sasun than usual, it is possible that they were induced to come merely as a measure of precaution against a revolutionary outbreak.

I can hear nothing as to the reports of arms having been distributed to the tribes, though I had been told that many Kurds were seen proceeding towards Sasun without arms, as if in expectation of such a distribution; on the contrary, it is rumoured here that in some cases Kurds have been disarmed by the authorities.

The feeling in Moush would seem to be that in face of the great strength of the Kurds, the revolutionaries are not sufficiently numerous to venture on a decisive movement unless considerably reinforced from outside.

This contingency is foreseen by the authorities, and the Vali of Erzeroum telegraphed about a week ago to his colleague at Bitlis that some fifty revolutionaries were expected to cross the frontier shortly, that he would do all he could to prevent this, but advised that the border of the Bitlis Vilayet should be carefully watched, for fear any of them

should succeed in passing. Eighty soldiers were accordingly sent northwards from Bitlis on the 8th August, with orders, I understand, to pass over Mount Nimrud, the vast crater of that extinct volcano being regarded as a favourite hiding place for law breakers of all kinds.

The departure of this small body of troops caused some alarm in Bitlis, and on the 9th the Armenian portion of the bazaar was closed for a few hours. I could hear of no adequate reason for the panic, though I suppose some rumour must have spread to the effect that the soldiers were expecting to meet the revolutionaries in the neighbourhood. The alarm soon died down and the shops were reopened.

The authorities maintain that their intention is to avoid any attack on the revolutionaries, and to maintain order among the Kurds; they are, however, unwilling to give any indication as to what they would do if attacked. It is to be feared that in that case reprisals might be undertaken, and that the Kurds might soon join the troops, with the usual results of such partnership.

They also assert positively that there are but few soldiers in Sasun, three companies and sixty gendarmes, and though Christians estimate the number higher, perhaps at two battalions, all agree that they are not numerous enough to contemplate a serious movement against the revolutionaries. Six battalions form the garrison of the Sandjak, but of these only about one is visible in Moush though there are detachments in Gop and Melasgird, and small bodies of a company or half a company at Surp Garabet, Surp Ohannes, Arakelotz and other principal monasteries.

Hadji Hassan Pasha, Mutessarif of Gueudj, who is now in charge of this Sandjak, expressed the same views as the Vali with regard to the peaceable intentions of the Government; but he seemed to me too ready to speak of "the Armenians" as the dangerous element, rather than of the "revolutionaries," and though of couse he admitted the distinction between the two, yet I fear that in case of an outbreak, serious danger may arise from this attitude on his part, which the Vali, though his language is perfectly correct, probably lacks the energy to control.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 97.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, August* 23, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that such news as I have been able to obtain here in regard to Moush and Sasun is of a reassuring nature, and Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote also reports that the situation is more satisfactory. I think, therefore, that there are fair grounds for hope that the danger of serious events in those regions is over for the time being.

In my humble opinion there is very little room for doubt that the authorities have made full arrangements to use the pretext of the presence of a certain number of revolutionaries in the Sasun mountains in order to give the Armenians there a severe lesson in the nature of that inflicted in 1894; and that the Kurdish tribes have been summoned to the mountains in order to assist the troops in their work. It is possible that it was intended to clear Sasun of Armenians once for all, and to replace them by Kurds. Had these plans been carried out, it is evident that there would have been danger of the Kurds and Moslem population generally getting out of hand, and that a repetition of the massacres of 1895 might have resulted, though, personally, I do not think this probable.

Fortunately, through the Vali of Erzeroum, early information of the intended operations in Sasun was obtained; and the representations made by your Excellency and by the Embassies of other Powers at Constantinople have resulted in instructions being sent that these operations should be abandoned, or at least largely modified. Probably, therefore, unless the revolutionaries are mad enough to bring matters to a head by attacking the troops, no movement of importance will take place this year.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 98.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 530.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 4*, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 373 of the 30th June, and 387 of the 8th July last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Damascus reporting the result of the trial of the persons implicated in the riot in the Christian quarter of that city in June last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 98.

Acting Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 66.)
Sir, *Damascus, August* 17, 1903.

WITH reference to my Quarterly Report No. 59 of the 8th ultimo, and to Mr. Consul Richards' despatch No. 55 of the 18th June, 1903, I have the honour to report as follows:—

The trial of the Christian Haleby for killing a policeman on the 14th June last, and of 20 Christians, of whom 14 were tried by default, for riot on the same occasion, resulted on the 13th instant in the sentence on Haleby to 15 years' hard labour for homicide, and in the sentence on 3 Christians, 2 of them by default, to 6 months', and on 5 to 1 month's imprisonment. The 5 were at once released so that only 1 of the 8 is now in prison, the remaining 12 having been acquitted, and the charges against others having been previously dismissed by the Juge d'Instruction. I am informed that the charges of cursing the Prophet and the Government were suppressed. The leniency of the authorities has given great satisfaction to the Christian population.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 99.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 538.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 4*, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 523 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have just received from the Acting British Consul-General at Beirout giving an account of the attempted assassination of the American Vice-Consul and of the general state of lawlessness in that town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 99.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 103.)
Sir, *Beirout, August* 27, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 101 of the 21st instant, I have the honour to report that the state of public security in this city has been, if possible, even less satisfactory since the arrival of the Commission of Inquiry than it was before these functionaries arrived. Not that I would for a moment insinuate that any blame attaches on that account to Ali Danish Bey and Mansour Bey, who are, I am informed, most assiduous in the

performance of the difficult task which has been assigned to them, and who, in any case, having no executive powers whatever, cannot interfere, either directly or indirectly, in the administration of this city and province. It was, however, to be expected that the Vali, out of respect for the presence of the Commissioners, for the sake of appearances, if for no better motive, would have strained every nerve to safeguard public life and property—at all events for a time. So far from this being the case, house after house was broken into during the past week, culminating in a most barefaced robbery from the Italian Consulate and an attempt to murder the American Vice-Consul as he was driving home.

My Italian colleague, whose watch and many valuable articles of jewellery were carried off from his very bedside while he slept, sent M. Pittaluga, the Vice-Consul who represents Italy at Damascus, and who is at present here on leave, to the Vali on the following morning to complain of the outrage, and to insist on the adoption of the most energetic measures to insure the discovery and arrest of the guilty persons. M. Pittaluga, being met with the bland but positive assurance that the Consul-General had been robbed by his own servants, went into the matter in detail, and pointed out that all the indications go to show that the robbers (there can be no doubt that they were two) entered the house from without. The Vice-Consul went on to say that most fortunately his chief did not awake, otherwise the robbers would in all probability have killed him, or, at all events, have done him some serious injury in order to avoid detection; to which the Vali smilingly assented by "Perhaps they would," which so exasperated M. Pittaluga that he left the room abruptly without even saluting his Excellency.

The Consul-General, who is naturally most indignant at the attitude of easy, and I may almost say, contemptuous, indifference assumed by the Vali, has both telegraphed and written to his Ambassador, depicting the situation in the very strongest terms.

It was only two days later that Mr. Magelson, the United States' Vice-Consul, who was driving home shortly before midnight, was deliberately fired at with a revolver by an individual who had posted himself near a street lamp for the purpose, the better to insure the correctness of his aim. Fortunately for himself, the Vice-Consul was lying back in his carriage, of which the hood was up, otherwise the shot, which was fired so close that he was almost stunned by the violence of the explosion, would undoubtedly have taken effect in some part of his person. He stopped the carriage as soon as possible, and both he and the coachman ran a few steps and tried to identify the would-be assassin, who, however, disappeared at once into the darkness. Mr. Magelson proceeded without further delay to the nearest guard-house, only a few hundred paces distant, and gave the alarm, but although the police posted there dispersed at once in pursuit of his assailant, no arrest was effected by them either then or subsequently. On the following morning the Vice-Consul (his chief being temporarily absent in the mountain) wrote to complain of this incident to the Vali, who ordered the arrest, after a very summary inquiry, of a lad of 15, who, he asserted, had, when in a state of intoxication, 'fired a pistol into the air merely with the object of frightening the Vice-Consul!" The impudent futility of such a reply was so staggering to Mr. Magelson that he telegraphed at once to his chief, begging him to return to Beirout in order to lay the matter before the American Minister by telegraph, which he (the Consul) in fact did without further delay.

I have little doubt in my own mind that the neglect and indifference exhibited by the Vali on this and many similar occasions are the outcome of the conviction that, come what may, be the complaints of his venality and maladministration what they will, his place is assured to him, thanks to the hearty support he receives at the Palace.

Many persons here, both Moslems and Christians, seem to think that his perspicacity is not at fault, and that so long as he continues to send handsome money presents to a certain very influential personage in the Palace, he may continue his career of smuggler-in-chief and extortioner with absolute impunity. These are strong expressions, but I am of opinion that their employment is warranted by the facts of the case. In the meantime all the honest inhabitants of this city, whether natives or Europeans, Christians or Moslems, are asking themselves and each other how long this state of things is to continue, how long the administration of one of the chief ports in the Levant is to be an open scandal and byword throughout the Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 101[a].

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 551.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 10, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Secret and Confidential despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna, describing the state of affairs of that district, as having assumed a somewhat serious character of general demoralization, and advocating the visit of foreign ships of war in order to restore public confidence.

There is not, I venture to say, a seaport in Turkey where the presence of a foreign man-of-war would not be welcomed at present, but it is impossible to comply with such requests without more definite reasons, as it would entail the prolonged sojourn of His Majesty's ships in various Turkish ports, and disorganize proportionately the Admiral's arrangements.

I have informed Mr. Cumberbatch in the despatch, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy herewith, that I could not under present circumstances recommend the dispatch of a ship of war, but that it was not impossible that some of the British squadron might visit Smyrna in the course of the autumn. I have also told him that in case of emergency His Majesty's ship "Montagu" was close at hand at the island of Lemnos, and that should the necessity arise, and the life and property of British subjects be in danger, the ship would, I was sure, immediately come to his assistance.

I would venture to suggest that the Admiral might be warned of the possibility of such a request being made to the Captain of His Majesty's ship "Montagu."

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 101[a].

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 50. Secret. Confidential.)
Sir, *Smyrna, September 1, 1903.*

THOUGH nothing of special interest has taken place in the administrative and economical condition of this town and district since my Confidential Report to your Excellency, dated the 16th December, 1902, I consider it necessary that your Excellency should be made aware of the unsatisfactory position of affairs in general which has been brought about by three causes, *i.e.*, the continued draining of the country of all its possible revenues, the increased power of corruption in high administrative circles, and the growing insecurity of life and property.

The feverish activity of the Finance Minister and his agents, in "sucking up" every farthing due for taxes of all denominations, existed before the present complications in European Turkey commenced, and the severity shown on all sides in the collection of taxes has been duly reported.

In order to meet the requirements of the troops now employed in the European provinces, the Agents of the Minister of Finance have become daily more and more exacting, especially in the case of arrears and of disputed accounts.

Whilst it has hitherto been the usage to be satisfied with more or less irregular annual settlements, they now press people to pay every quarter, and, where possible, in advance.

I have had to interfere several times on behalf of British subjects who have fallen under the notice of the Permanent Financial Commission, appointed some two or three years ago for the express purpose of assisting the "Defterdar" in coercing people, especially foreigners, to pay their taxes, and within the last week or two I have had also to protest against the transmission to me of official requests to send a Delegate to assist at the attachment of personal property of British subjects ordered

by this Commission, for payment of taxes due on real property, an innovation which we cannot accept.

All the money swept up, not only by the "Defterdar" and his subordinates, but by every other department receiving taxes or levying fees, goes to Constantinople as soon as collected, not in large sums like 10,000*l.* or more, as hitherto, but in driblets.

In the meantime all officials, civilians, and military, including police and gendarmerie, are several months in arrears with their pay and their natural discontentment is added to that of the inhabitants who are made to pay the taxes.

In addition to this harsh treatment at the hands of the revenue officials, assisted where necessary by the police and gendarmerie forces, all, high and low, rich and poor, have to submit to that other form of taxation which, though it has always existed in this country to a lesser or greater degree, has not always been carried out in high quarters here on the same systematic scale as at present. I refer to the system of "bakshish."

The general idea of this species of blackmail was, until recent years, the presentation of a reasonable sum to an official who might be in a position to assist a party in any matter he might have in that official's department. Generally it was resorted to by persons who felt their case was a weak one, or who had a special favour to ask for.

Nowadays it is more often the official who makes overtures to the interested parties with a view to negotiating the price of his assistance or his share in any profits to be derived from the contemplated transaction.

In this vilayet the head of this official "band of brigands" is, I am sorry to relate, Said Bey, the son of Kiamil Pasha, the Governor-General of this province, assisted by his brother-in-law, Faik Pasha. Following the example set in the highest quarters at Constantinople, they have instituted a regular "web" into which everyone who has any "business" with any Government Department must inevitably fall.

Their agents or partners are numerous, but they secure the lion's share.

Every man who seeks an appointment must first pay a sum proportionate to his future salary to some member of this "gang."

Said and Faik are ready to interfere in any case before the Courts if paid to do so, and in fact they can be applied to in connection with any matter, *e.g.*, a police regulation prohibits the keeping of brothels outside the limits of a certain quarter of the town, but by paying Said Bey and the Chief of Police a few pounds every year this regulation is defied by many houses of ill-fame.

Negotiations are at the present moment on foot with the leader of a band of incendiaries to recommence operations (suspended owing principally to my action), so as to force the Insurance Companies to subvention Said Bey who will then undertake to stop the fires.

Of course Said "feeds" his protectors at the Palace who are not going to stop him, firstly, because their own pockets gain, and secondly, because they know that his conduct is bringing his old father's name into dishonour.

It will be asked why Kiamil Pasha allows this sort of thing to go on under his very nose. The only explanation can be that he has got thoroughly sick of everything, and also feels impotent to stop an evil which, wittingly or unwittingly he has allowed to attain its present dimensions.

In the vilayet of the Archipelago it is Abedive Pasha who is the chief "sinner," but he manages affairs of this nature himself, and allows his subordinates more or less freedom to do what they can for themselves, so long as they do not exceed the bounds of discretion. His lengthened annual stays at Mitylene under pretext of "inspection" are put down to the fact that that island is a richer field of operations than Rhodes or Scio.

The third evil enumerated by me, *i.e.*, the general insecurity of life and property must be put down to the inefficiency of the police and gendarmerie forces, due to their being always left so many months in arrears of pay, which disheartens them, and takes all zeal and honesty out of them.

The recrudescence of brigandage this summer, and the abortive attempts to capture three or four well-known bands of brigands, also the frequency of isolated cases of highway robbery, accompanied with violence in some cases, in the outskirts of Smyrna, prove the utter uselessness of the police and gendarmerie.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that great discontent exists among all classes, and that, given the unsettled condition of things in the European provinces, the elements of disquiet existing in this region should give rise to a certain amount of thought among the residents in this town.

Without wishing to strike the note of alarm, I think it my duty to let your Excellency know that, though nothing has come to my knowledge to justify the supposition that there is any danger, the elements of disorder do exist.

The "leaven" of possible local disturbances is represented by the numerous Cretan refugees, who, while retaining their inborn hatred of Greeks (who in this province are very numerous), are thoroughly disgusted with the Ottoman Government, which, after inducing them to abandon Crete, has failed to keep its promises to find them occupation or provide them with lands. They belong to the worst class of Cretans, and are disliked by both Christians and Mussulmans alike wherever they have settled, as they have always proved themselves to be most objectionable neighbours, and their readiness to create trouble is a matter of public notoriety.

In addition to these, we have a great many Mussulman refugees from Bulgaria, who have been steadily immigrating into Asia Minor for the last twenty-five years. They have been hitherto quiet and inoffensive enough, but the exaggerated reports that reach them of the cruel treatment being received by their co-religionaries in European Turkey at the hands of the Bulgarian revolutionary bands are resuscitating their dormant feelings of enmity against Christians in general and Bulgarians in particular.

The native Mussulman population are daily receiving news of the sufferings of their relatives under arms, not only owing to privations and sickness due to bad military organization, but also owing to the irregular mode of operations of the revolutionary bands.

Should the dissatisfaction and fanaticism of these three Mussulman portions of the population of this town and district be excited by further events in the European provinces it would not need great provocation to induce them to take advantage of the incapacity and powerlessness of the Government to foment trouble with the Christian population, and it is more than doubtful whether the Governor-General, however desirous he may be of preventing mischief, would be able to cope with the situation.

The police force is, as stated above, utterly corrupt and unreliable, and the gendarmerie are unpaid, disorganized, and dissatisfied.

They have proved their utter inefficiency in not being able to put down brigandage this summer, besides which all their good horses were requisitioned for the cavalry in European Turkey.

The garrison is of little good, as it is composed of the remnants of a battalion of "Redifs," among whom there has been a good deal of sickness, so that the strength at Smyrna has dwindled down to about 200 men, who barely suffice for guard duty in the various military posts in this town.

Owing to a desire not to create any unnecessary alarm I have refrained from speaking to any of my colleagues on this subject, except M. Blanc, the French Consul-General, who has had a long experience of Turkish affairs, especially in Crete, which is not the case with most of our colleagues. He is also in possession of information which coincides with mine and, after an exchange of views, he agreed with me as to the unadvisability of consulting any other colleague at present. He is, however, writing confidentially to the French Ambassador to inform him of the state of things, and to suggest the dispatch of a man-of-war to Smyrna.

In my opinion, though the danger can be scarcely called imminent, the presence of a vessel of the Mediterranean fleet would most decidedly act as a deterrent to any would-be disturbers of the peace, and would certainly relieve the general anxiety.

It is immaterial to what country the man-of-war belongs, but, as both French, Italian, and Austrian squadrons have been here this year, a visit from a British ship, or even a squadron, would not cause so much comment, as none of His Majesty's ships have been here since June 1902.

It would, however, be advisable to warn the Commander-in-chief (should your Excellency consider that there is sufficient cause to communicate with him in the desired sense) that there is an epidemic of small-pox at Smyrna at present, and that it would be advisable to make arrangements for the ship to be stationed at Vourlah after, perhaps, a "look-in" at Smyrna, where the men need not land.

For your Excellency's further information, I may state that I have good reason for believing that the person who would most welcome the presence in this harbour of a man-of-war at the present moment is Kiamil Pasha, who is in a position to know better than any one else his impotence should anything in the shape of a disturbance occur in this town and district, owing to the utter unreliability of the forces at his command and to the uselessness of expecting any help from other quarters.

The important British trade interests that would be affected by disturbances in or near this town during the busy season now commencing, and the welfare of the large British community here, must be my excuse for troubling your Excellency about local affairs at a moment when you must be fully occupied with matters of much greater urgency and gravity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 101*.

Sir N. O'Conor to Consul-General Cumberbatch.

Therapia, September 10, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 50, Secret and Confidential, of the 1st September, describing the state of affairs of the Smyrna Consular district as having assumed a somewhat serious character of general demoralization, and advocating the visit of foreign ships of war in order to restore public confidence.

I have transmitted a copy of your despatch to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but I regret that I do not feel justified, without more definite and cogent reasons than those advanced by you, recommending the dispatch of a ship of war to Smyrna.

It is not impossible, however, that some of the British squadron may visit Smyrna in the course of the autumn, and in case of emergency, His Majesty's ship "Montagu" is close at hand at Lemnos. Should the necessity arise, and the life and property of British subjects be in danger, I am sure that the Commander of that ship would immediately come to your assistance, and I have suggested to His Majesty's Government that the Admiral should be advised of the possibility of such a request being made to the "Montagu."

I am, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 100.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 166.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September* 9, 1903.

I PRESUME that order has been restored at Beyrout, as the Acting Consul-General telegraphs that the effect of the arrival of the Vali of Damascus has been excellent, and makes no mention of fresh disturbances.

No. 101.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 550.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 10, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an extract from the "Levant Herald,"* announcing the creation of a personal or poll tax, to which the entire male population of the Ottoman Empire is to be subjected, and which is roughly estimated to bring in about one and a-half million pounds a-year.

Although this tax will not, of course, apply to foreigners, yet its imposition at the present juncture is noteworthy as indicating that the Ottoman Government do not consider that there is any immediate prospect of the extraordinary expenditure consequent on the military measures taken to face the Macedonian insurrection being diminished.

An extra tax on horses, pigs, cattle, &c., is also about to be imposed, from which the receipts are expected to be close on half-a-million Turkish pounds per annum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 102.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 10.)

(No. 554.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 10, 1903.

IN forwarding to your Lordship the accompanying despatch No. 12 of 26th August from His Majesty's Consul at Batoum, transmitted to me under flying seal, respecting the movements of the Armenian Revolutionary Society, I have the honour to state that the Armenian Patriarch called on me a few days ago and informed me that he had received news that Ottoman troops were slowly but gradually concentrating round Sassoun. He feared that an attack on the Armenians was intended. His Beatitude, while stating that he was very grateful for the representations which he had heard I had recently made to the Ottoman Government with a view to the protection of his people, and also for the dispatch of the British Vice-Consul at Bitlis to Moush, where his presence had had a good effect, besought me to continue my efforts to prevent excesses on the part of the Kurds, who would take advantage of any opportunity for pillaging afforded them by the action of the Imperial troops.

I assured his Beatitude that what influence I possessed with the Sublime Porte would be used in persuading the Government to protect the lives and property of the Christian population of the districts in question.

Information recently received from His Majesty's Consular officers at Erzeroum and Moush points to the return of a quieter feeling, and I am inclined to think that my earnest representations to the Grand Vizier have led to the desired result. Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote has reported his return to Bitlis.

I avail, &c
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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* Not printed.

Enclosure in No. 102.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

(No. 11.)
My Lord, *Batoum, August* 26, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that on the 22nd instant General Dringin, the Governor of the newly formed Province of Batoum, issued orders that in future no person is to carry arms of any description in the town.

This measure, although not very willingly accepted by the Georgian and other native portions of the inhabitants, who have, from time immemorial, been accustomed to go about armed to the teeth, has been well received by all other classes of the community, and should the local police authorities continue to enforce the regulations with the zeal which has marked the first few days of its introduction, there can be little doubt that cases of murder, manslaughter, stabbing and other such-like crimes which have hitherto been so rife, in fact almost of daily occurrence, within the limits of the town, will gradually diminish, and in course of time become extinct.

It is noteworthy that since the 1st (14th) July last, the date on which the town of Batoum became the centre of Administration for the province which bears its name, the Governor has been most energetic in his endeavours to establish law and order in his district, and, with this object in view, he has invited the inhabitants not to collect in groups in the streets, and to disperse on being called upon by the police to do so. He also asks the population of the town to institute a system of vigilance by the organization of a body of porters, whose duties will be to keep watch by day and by night at the entrances of the respective houses to which they belong, the owners of the houses paying them a monthly wage for this purpose. These men are also to assist the police in the exercise of their duties in cases of emergency when the police force is not sufficiently strong to cope with street riots, brawls, and other occurrences of a similar nature, and, lastly, under a heavy penalty for non-compliance with the order which is to be imposed on the house owner, the porters have to inform the police of any and all suspicious characters who enter or depart from the house which they are supposed to guard, as well as of any changes that may take place in the inmates of such house.

Under the conditions set forth above, together with a few other measures of minor importance, the Governor hopes that the disorders and general unrest which have prevailed during the greater portion of the past eighteen months amongst the population of the locality which has so recently come under his tutelage may be checked, if not altogether curtailed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 103.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 550. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 11, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 538 of the 4th instant, and to subsequent telegrams, I have the honour to report that the lawlessness at Beirout appears to have reached a culminating point during the last week, and open conflicts took place in the streets on the 6th of September between the Moslems and the Christians, resulting in the death of eight persons and the wounding of an equal number.

Mr. Acting Consul-General Richards made earnest representations to the Vali, and the Commandant and the Consular Corps met together to concert measures for the protection of the life and property of the foreigners in which, at their request, the Commodore of the American ships of war agreed to co-operate, if necessary.

On the 8th September Mr. Richards reported that the situation had somewhat improved, but that general panic still existed together with a complete stagnation of business, practically all the Christians having closed their shops and fled to the Lebanon. On the next day the Governor-General of Damascus arrived, in accordance with orders from Constantinople, and at once took measures to restore public confidence.

In the meantime, Mr. Leishman, the United States' Minister, had been pressing the Porte for the dismissal of the Vali as an act of reparation for the attempt on the life of the American Consul, and his representations resulted in the announcement

yesterday of the removal of the Vali of Beirout and the appointment of Nizam Pasha, the Governor-General of Damascus, to act in his place.

The French Ambassador also, who, in the first instance, seemed indisposed to second Mr. Leishman's efforts, or even to extend him his sympathy, took alarm at the prospect of a Representative of a Power other than France obtaining the dismissal of such an important functionary of Syria, sent his Dragoman at the last moment to request the removal of the Vali, and will no doubt claim a share in the credit of the success.

Reshid Bey, the late Vali of Beirout, enjoyed great influence at the Palace, being a protégé of Izzet Bey, the Sultan's Secretary. Your Lordship will remember that in my despatch No. 523 of the 28th August, I reported having brought his conduct some time ago to the notice of the Grand Vizier, who begged me not to press the question at that time. It appears that he owes his influence with the Sultan largely to his zeal in discovering imaginary conspiracies and the skill with which he detects and confiscates masses of brochures and seditious documents, of which he is himself sometimes the author.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 104.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 17.)

(No. 168.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September* 16, 1903.

I HAVE reliable information that orders to proceed to Syra have been given to a detachment of the French fleet.

The Acting Consul-General at Beyrout reports that he believes the French Consul has asked for warships to visit Beyrout, and adds that, although order has been re-established, the Maronites refuse to return from the Lebanon, where they had taken refuge.

No. 105.

Foreign Office to Admiralty.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 19, 1903.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to transmit to you, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,* forwarding a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Smyrna, in which he suggests that the visit of foreign ships of war to that port would have a beneficial effect in view of the general demoralization which prevails there.

Sir N. O'Conor while concurring in this opinion, recognizes the inconvenience which would result from constant and simultaneous requests for the presence of His Majesty's ships from various parts of the Turkish Empire, and he has confined himself to informing Mr. Cumberbatch that His Majesty's ship "Montagu" could doubtless proceed from Lemnos in case of urgent necessity, and that some of the British squadron might visit Smyrna in the course of the autumn.

At the same time Lord Lansdowne would be obliged if the Lords Commissioners would inform him whether one of His Majesty's ships could conveniently visit Smyrna at an early date, without disturbing the arrangements already made for the protection of British subjects at Salonica.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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* Sir N. O'Conor, No. 551.

No. 106.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 289.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 17, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a Memorandum on the subject of a riot which has taken place in Transcaucasia, in consequence of the promulgation of the Russian Decree directing the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, and Finance to take under their immediate control the property hitherto held by the Armenian Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

Inclosure in No. 106.

Memorandum on Armenian outbreak in Transcaucasia.

IN June of this year a Decree was published ordering the Ministries of the Interior, Finance, and Agriculture to take charge of the lands and moneys owned by the Armenian Church in Transcaucasia, and to administer them directly; the proceeds to be devoted to the support of the Armenian schools and churches.

On the 11th September an outbreak took place at Elizabethpol. A riotous mob of Armenians, after a meeting held to protest against this Decree, attacked the police and wounded several. Troops arrived on the scene, and were obliged to use their fire-arms. The mob dispersed. Seven Armenians were killed and twenty-seven wounded. Two days afterwards a solemn funeral service was held in the Armenian Cathedral at Tiflis, in the presence of 2,000 Armenians. After the service the Armenian priest, Ter Ararat, solemnly cursed the authors of the new law. The crowd then became riotous, and began to throw stones and fire on the police. Cossacks were called up. One Armenian was killed and four ringleaders were arrested, including the priest.

The press calls attention to the serious nature of the outbreak, and demands that the Catholicos of Edzmiazin should be called on to disavow the proceedings of the Armenian clergy. Should he refuse, it would be incumbent on the Government to imitate the proceedings of Mouravieff in Poland in 1863, who declared that the priest's robe would not protect the traitor.

The law was put in force three days after the outbreak. This, says the "Novoye Vremya," is the first result of the riot. Russia desires perfect religious freedom throughout her dominions. But if it is desired to raise an Armenian question in Russia, other means must be resorted to by the Government. At present the Government administers the Armenian funds for the benefit of the Armenian Church. But if the law is opposed by the Armenians the Government will have to reconsider its policy.

No. 107.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 571.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 17, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum reporting an abortive attempt on the part of Armenian revolutionaries to cross the frontier in the Tortoum district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 107.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September* 2, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that, about ten days ago, information reached the Vali that between thirty and forty Armenian revolutionaries were about to enter Turkish territory from Russia, and intended to cross the frontier in the Tortoum district. His Excellency therefore sent a detachment of soldiers and gendarmes, who met the revolutionaries at the frontier. After the exchange of a few shots the latter retired again into Russia, leaving behind them a quantity of explosive cartridges and dynamite bombs. What their object was in abandoning these explosives is a mystery. The only explanation appears to be that they were bound by some agreement, either with the Armenian or with the Macedonian Committees, to make some sort of demonstration, and that, in the usual half-hearted Armenian manner, as soon as they saw signs of opposition they gave up the attempt, leaving behind the explosives as visible evidence of the terrible deeds which they had meant to perform.

Signs have not been wanting lately of some kind of concerted movement between the Committees in Macedonia and the Armenian revolutionaries; but any such agreement has entirely failed to be effective in these parts, so far, owing to the feeble action of the latter and the want of sympathy with them among the Christian population here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 108.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 23.)

(No. 577.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 17, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 523 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout reporting that no satisfaction has as yet been obtained for the attack on the United States' Vice-Consul at that port.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 113.)
Sir, *Beyrout, September* 11, 1903.

I HAVE not reported hitherto on the subject of the satisfaction claimed by the United States' Government for the attempted assassination of Mr. Magelssen, their Vice-Consul here, because it has been impossible, so far, to find out exactly how the matter stands. I learn, however, to-day, from the United States' Consul that the present Vali (Nazim Pasha) is taking the matter up seriously, and hopes to be able to discover and arrest the assailant before long.

Hitherto the authorities have persisted in their original statement, which was to the effect that there was no attempt on the Vice-Consul's life; that what he imagined to be such was the thoughtless prank of a Christian lad of fifteen years of age, who, being on his way back from a wedding party, fired his pistol into the air close to Mr. Magelsson's carriage with a view to frightening him. Moreover, a Christian boy of the requisite age, who had been well schooled in the part which he was to play in this farce, was thrown into prison in order to support this theory. It is true that when this explanation was rejected by my American colleague with scorn and indignation the ex-Vali bethought him of the old-fashioned Turkish device of arresting and imprisoning three other persons who—whatever their antecedents may have been, and

considering the number and variety of criminals at large here, their past may probably enough, not bear inspection—had, I understand, nothing whatever to do with this matter. They, as well as the boy, have now been set at liberty, and it is hoped that at last the real culprit will be produced.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 109.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 581.)
My Lord,

Therapia, September 18, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 556 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of despatches from the Acting British Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting on the disturbances which recently took place in that city, and also one from Mr. Monahan on the situation arising in Damascus in connection therewith.

Although order and security have been re-established, yet, according to a telegram from Mr. Richards, dated the 15th September, some 20,000 Christians, mostly Maronites, who had fled in their panic to the Lebanon, refuse to return to Beyrout.

Mr. Richards hears that this refusal is largely due to the urgent counsels of the Russian and French Consuls-General, who wish to show that disorder still reigns in spite of the removal of the Vali.

The French Consul-General is more insistent in his advice, as, having, it is said, applied for ships of war, he would like the arrival of the French fleet to be the signal for the return of the refugees, and I am inclined to think the French Ambassador would be glad to take advantage of this opportunity of renewing the French influence in Syria, which has of late been so greatly supplanted by Russia.

The appointment is announced this morning of Khalil Pasha, the Vali of Broussa, as Vali of Beyrout, while Reshid Bey, the late Vali of Beyrout, is appointed to Broussa in his place. Khalil Pasha is a good administrator and of greater capacity than most of the Turkish Governors, but the appointment of Reshid Bey is intolerable under the circumstances, and will not, I imagine, be accepted by the United States after their having just obtained his dismissal from Beyrout.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 109.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 109.)
Sir,

Beyrout, September 8, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 108 of the 5th instant and my telegram of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report to your Excellency as follows:—

At about 8 o'clock on the morning of the 6th instant (Sunday) a band of armed Moslems came up from the outskirts of the quarter known as Mezrâa, on the south-eastern side of this city, and began firing on the Christians (Greek Orthodox) who were just then leaving the parish church of the Masseitbeh quarter. It would appear that the latter had got wind of the projected attack, so that all, or at all events the greater number, of the young men were armed with revolvers and were therefore in a position to return the fire of their assailants, which they did with a certain amount of courage and persistence. The Christians, however, were in a decided minority, and were ultimately compelled to flee before the superior numbers of the attacking party, most of whom, it should be noted, were armed with Martini-Henry rifles. The Moslems then proceeded to scour the quarter of Masseitbeh in all directions, the population of which is entirely Christian, firing on inoffensive fugitives regardless of age and sex, pouring volleys into the houses of well-to-do people against whom they had no cause of complaint, and, certainly in two cases of which I had ocular proof myself, breaking into, sacking, and totally destroying the contents of the houses of perfectly quiet and peaceable people. It was only at noon that I was informed of what was going on, and I drove at once, accompanied by my Austrian colleague and M. Pettaluga, my Italian colleague from Damascus, who happens to be here at present, to the scene of the affray.

There followed us, in a separate carriage, Mr. Magelssen, the American Vice-Consul, and Lieutenant Hussey, and a midshipman (whose name I do not know), both of the United States' ship "Brooklyn," whom Admiral Cotton had deputed to inquire into and report on this outbreak. Hearing on the way that the Vali, accompanied by the Commandant, was at a guardhouse close at hand, we made our way there and found these officials, surrounded by their respective staffs and a small body of troops, seated in close conference.

I spoke to both the Vali and the Commandant, and especially to the former, in very strong terms, upbraiding them with their inability to preserve public order and protect the lives and property of His Majesty's Christian subjects. I asked the Vali especially how long these acts of violence and bloodshed were to go unpunished, and whether he realized the serious nature of the situation in this city, where assassination is a matter of daily occurrence. I told him the state of things was perfectly intolerable, and that I should hold him personally responsible if these murderous attacks were allowed to continue. His Excellency assured me that he was doing all he could, that he had hurried to the spot as soon as he was informed of the disturbance, that the troops were patrolling the quarter in all directions, and that the outbreak had already been quelled. It was about then that Mr. Magelssen and Lieutenant Hussey came up, and I introduced the latter to the Vali and the Commandant, explaining the object of his mission. Lieutenant Hussey then proceeded to inform the Vali, with my assistance, that the Admiral had sent him to find out whether the local authorities were in a position to put an end to and prevent the recurrence of this internecine strife, and, if not, to inform them that he (the Admiral) was willing, with the Vali's consent, to land bluejackets and marines, and co-operate with the Sultan's soldiers and police in restoring order and protecting life and property in this city. To this the Vali replied that he had 1,000 men with whom to perform this task, which, he thanked God! was easily within their powers, and that, in fact, they had already done all that was necessary! Seeing that further conversation of this description was as futile as it was exasperating, I proposed to Lieutenant Hussey, who appeared to be an intelligent and energetic young officer, to proceed at once to the church where the disturbance originated and make inquiries there as to where we could find and examine the victims of the attack. On our way thither we observed the marks of rifle bullets on the façades of most of the houses we passed, the windows in many cases being smashed to pieces by these projectiles.

Shortly before reaching our destination we came upon a sort of outhouse where some twelve soldiers had been posted, and there in their midst, lying on the ground, was the dead body of a comrade, who had been shot, they said, by a Christain; while facing us, leaning up against the wall, was another soldier with his face smashed by a rifle bullet and streaming with blood. He, too, the sergeant whom I interrogated declared, had been shot by a Christian from behind a neighbouring house. But inasmuch as he confessed that the assailants had, in neither case, been seen or recognized, this was purely a matter of conjecture.

We then proceeded to the church, where we found and cross-questioned a lot of terrified women, whose accounts of the origin and issue of the conflict were so confused and mutually contradictory that we really learned little beyond the fact that two women and, they thought, one man had been seriously wounded. Having induced one of these women to act as our guide, we were taken to see the two women above mentioned, one of whom had her thigh smashed by a rifle bullet, while the other, quite a young girl, had been shot in the abdomen. On further inquiry, however, it transpired that the latter had been shot in her own home, in which we found her. She had been sitting close to the door of the house which was shut, and even locked, when one of these ruffians came up and fired his rifle through the panels, so that the bullet smashed to pieces the chair on which she was sitting and entered her body.

Further on we entered another house, the floor of which was literally swimming with blood, which had flowed from wounds inflicted on two men, both of whom were dead. One was lying on a bed, while the other had been already removed for burial. I counted no fewer than eight wounds in the body and head of the man whom we saw, most of them evidently caused by bullets. We were then taken to a house where an old man was lying dead. He was asleep, they told us, when he was shot through the back in two places, one of the wounds being of a most ghastly description. We saw two other wounded men, but in neither case were their hurts of a serious nature. We were then taken to see two houses which had been broken into and ransacked, one being a small building belonging to a relatively poor man, a Greek subject, he informed me, while the other was one of the best houses in the quarter. In both, everything that was breakable had been smashed to pieces, while all

that was valuable and portable had been carried off. The large house especially, which, it was evident, has been handsomely furnished, was such a scene of havoc and desolation, as was piteous to witness, while the heart-broken lamentations of the occupants, an old couple with their six daughters, who sobbed out that the fruit of the petty economies of a lifetime had been destroyed by these savages in half an hour, were grievous to listen to.

As by this time it was getting late, we decided to leave the Musseitbeh quarter and proceed to the neighbouring Moslem quarter, where, we were informed, were two dead Moslems, who had been killed in the course of the fray. On our arrival there, however, we were told, on making inquiries, that both of these men had been buried. This was hardly probable, considering how short a time had elapsed since their death, but we soon understood that, in any case, it was not intended that we should see the bodies. I was also informed by an officer who came up just then that two other soldiers had been wounded and removed to the hospital, so that, if that statement were correct—and I have no reason to suppose that it was not—one soldier had been killed and three wounded in their efforts to quell the outbreak. This will give your Excellency an idea of its serious nature.

As by this time we had seen the principal victims of the outbreak and had obtained a very fair idea of its extent, and the hour being somewhat advanced (4·30 P.M.), we, *i.e.*, Lieutenant Hussey and his companions and myself—for my colleagues had left us some little time previously—decided to return, he to his ship to report to the Admiral and I to the hotel to snatch a hasty meal previously to taking part in a meeting of the Consular Body. It had been decided that we should meet at the Italian Consulate, my French, German, and Russian colleagues being absent in the Lebanon, and after some discussion of the situation, my Austrian colleague and myself were deputed to go on board the United States' ship "Brooklyn," and have an interview with Admiral Cotton. This we proceeded to do without any further delay, but even so, it was dark before we reached our destination. The Admiral received us most courteously, but in reply to our representations, backed up by the request that in case there were a regular massacre of Christians—a by no means improbable contingency—he would land troops to assist the local forces in protecting our co-religionists, restoring order, and securing respect for life and property, he demurred on the very intelligible ground that he could not do so without the consent and at the invitation of the Vali. I pointed out the extreme improbability of the latter contingency, and in reply to his quotations from the United States' Navy Regulations respecting the inviolability of the soil of a "civilized" and friendly Power, drew his attention to the fact that this country can only by courtesy be termed "civilized," and that, moreover, there were, I believed, precedents for the taking of such action as I proposed. I also reminded the Admiral that were there once a commencement of a massacre of native Christians, there was little probability that the lives of Europeans would be spared. After some further discussion, the Admiral stated that if the majority of the Consuls resident here appealed to him to protect their respective colonies, and even without such an appeal, he subsequently said, if the lives of Europeans were in imminent peril, he would at once land 500 sailors and marines, and do all that lay in his power to protect us.

Shortly afterwards, we took leave of the Admiral, who kindly sent us ashore in his steam launch.

It was nearly 9 o'clock before I returned to my hotel, and so too late to report to your Excellency telegraphically that night. On the following morning, I heard that while we were engaged in making inquiries in the Masseitbeh and Mezrâa quarters, a violent and unprovoked attack had been made by Moslems on Christians in the Ras-en Naba' quarter, three of the latter having been killed, and three, one of whom was a woman, wounded. In the Ashrafiyeh quarter, also, another Christian, a cook, was shot dead while on his way to his master's house.

I also saw in the Italian Consulate a poor young fellow, a Christian, who received a mortal wound in the chest (he is since dead) from a Moslem, while he was riding down into the town quietly and peaceably on his donkey.

All these last-mentioned outrages were deliberate cold-blooded assassinations, whereas those which formed the subject of my inquiry could, so far, be excused by the fact that their perpetrators had had their blood heated somewhat by the conflict which took place with the Christians at the outset.

Moreover, I learned subsequently that a Moslem had been shot dead in the Mezrâa quarter (beyond the Masseitbeh quarter) on the previous (Saturday) evening while eating his dinner in a sort of arbour or shelter in front of his house. It was stated—and, I understand, with some show of probability—that the murderer was a Christian, and that

the organized attack on Masseitbeh was an act of retaliation or vengeance. Not only so, but only a day or two previously a Moslem had been killed in a brawl by a Christian in the village of Beyt Merri, in the Lebanon, so that the Moslem attack on Masseitbeh and Ras-en-Naba', so it is argued on their behalf, was not altogether unprovoked. My short experience here goes to show that in eight cases out of ten the Moslems are the aggressors, and the Christians the victims in these constantly-recurring brawls and conflicts.

Occasionally, of course, a Christian with more courage than his fellows will strike down a Moslem, but as he knows that, if arrested, he is certain to be severely punished, while in the converse case the offender is equally assured of impunity, it is, as a rule, only in the Lebanon, or in districts within easy reach of it, that the Christian will venture to take the offensive.

Moreover, it should be noted that in this city and immediate neighbourhood the great majority of the Christians are of the small shopkeeper and respectable artisan classmen, who, although they may be armed, which many of them no doubt are, have neither the necessary skill nor courage to use their weapons to advantage. The Moslems, on the other hand, belong mostly to a lower social stratum, viz., that of blacksmiths, boatmen, porters, smugglers, port-loafers, *et hoc genus omne*, not to mention the scum and riffraff which are always to be found in seaport towns of the Levant. These men, who are all well armed, are generally young, strong, active, and audacious to a degree which I have rarely seen surpassed—men who look their betters in the face with an insolent provocative stare which is highly indicative of their readiness to pick your pocket or cut your throat, if necessary, in broad daylight. Such men are far more than a match for their Christian opponents, apart from the consideration that the police who here are notoriously incompetent, cowardly, and corrupt, generally side with their co-religionists, the Moslems, whether they are in the right or the wrong. And so it is that, in spite of the fact that the Christians are numerically superior to the Moslems, though not to the extent that is generally supposed, for, although some authorities put their relative proportions as three is to two, others no less competent to judge declare that they are very nearly equal in numbers, they are not really, and never will be, a match for them.

I should state, in conclusion, that some twenty persons have been either killed or wounded in this city during the course of Sunday, the 6th instant, of whom a list is now in the course of preparation, and three houses sacked, two of which I have seen.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 109.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 110.)

Sir, *Beyrout, September 9, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegram to your Excellency of yesterday's date, as well as to that of to-day, I have the honour to report that there is a distinct improvement in the general situation since the arrival here yesterday evening of Nazim Pasha from Damascus. His Excellency received quite an ovation from a very large crowd of Moslems who assembled to greet him on his alighting from the train. The absence of Christians from the scene, which has been somewhat adversely criticized in certain quarters, is easily explained by the fact that the great majority of them have fled to the Lebanon, whole streets of shops being closed, which gives the city a strangely deserted and forlorn appearance. In fact, speaking generally, only Moslem shops, of which there are relatively very few, remain open. The result is that business generally is in a state of stagnation, and it is already somewhat difficult to obtain certain kinds of provisions.

To return to the subject of Nazim Pasha's arrival, his Excellency drove off from the station in company with the Vali, and took possession of a suite of apartments allotted to him in Government House. After a short rest, Nazim Pasha drove all round those quarters of the city in which troubles have occurred, gave detailed orders as to the patrolling of the streets by the military, the posting of sentries, &c., and made a personal examination of the houses that have been broken into and looted.

As reported in my telegram of the 8th instant, a zaptieh was found dead in the Askrafiyeh quarter on the morning of that day, who had been killed during the previous night, it is supposed by a Christian or Christians whom he was trying to arrest, but there

is no evidence either way, and it is quite possible that the murderer may have been a Moslem.

I have called on Nazim Pasha, and received his return visit. He looks very harassed and worried, but is evidently determined to merit the very great confidence which his Sovereign and the people here of all races and religions place in him. He is thoroughly familiar with the city and the class of people he has to deal with, having already been Vali of Beyrout for a short time in 1997. But it should be remembered that the irrepressible and turbulent Moslem element, which he did so much then to eliminate, is a far stronger and more formidable factor in the situation now than it was six years ago, and he has undoubtedly been set a task which it will tax all his powers and his infinite knowledge and experience of police administration to achieve.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 109.

Acting Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 69.)
Damascus, September 10, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that half a battalion of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry were about to be sent from here to the Hauran on account of the recent murder of a lieutenant of gendarmerie by Druses and of a generally threatening state of affairs in that district, but that, at the request of Nazim Pasha, Vali of Damascus, who went to Beyrout the day before yesterday, they are now being kept here in readiness to be sent to Beyrout if needed for the restoration of order there.

Two waggon-loads of arms and ammunition were sent by rail yesterday to Beyrout. There does not appear to be, as yet, any dangerous excitement here. The impression among the Moslems is that their co-religionists have had decidedly the best of it in Beyrout, and have been the aggressors; but in the contrary event, if, for instance, it was heard that a formidable body of Christians were coming down on Beyrout from the mountains, the position of the Christians in Damascus, and still more in other centres in the vilayet, would probably be very dangerous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. H. MONAHAN.

No. 110.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received September 23.)

(Confidential.)
Admiralty, September 23, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 19th instant, inquiring if one of His Majesty's ships could visit Smyrna at an early date, without disturbing the arrangements already made for the protection of British subjects at Salonica, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request you will inform the Marquess of Lansdowne that a telegram, of which the following is a decipher, has been received from the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station:—"I can send 'Formidable' to Smyrna at once."

My Lords will therefore be glad to be informed whether Lord Lansdowne desires that a battleship should be sent at once to Smyrna.

I am to add that the Commander-in-Chief leaves the Island of Majorca on the 25th instant for Malta, where he is due on the 28th.

I am, &c.
(Signed) EVAN MACGREGOR.

No. 111.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 23.)

(No. 173.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September* 23, 1903.

ADMIRAL informed me to-day that orders had been sent to His Majesty's ship "Formidable" to proceed to Smyrna, and I have replied that it was better ship should remain at Suda Bay for the present, and that I was advising your Lordship to that effect.

As Italian ship has just been there and left again, and the French Ambassador, who has received similar report from his Consul to that sent in my despatch No. 551 of the 10th instant, does not think situation serious, it might be desirable, for the present, to avoid giving colour to the rumours now going about of contemplated action of British fleet in Turkish waters.

No. 112.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 13.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September* 15, 1903.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 12 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that the newspaper "Kavkaz" of the 30th August (30th September) contains an official intimation which I reproduce, here below, in translation:—

"Yesterday, the 29th August, at 9 o'clock in the morning, several thousand Armenians assembled, on the sounding of the church bell, near an Armenian Church, which is situated on the outskirts of the town of Elizavetpol with the object of protesting against the transfer of the administration of the property belonging to the Armeno-Gregorian Church to the State, in virtue of a Decree of His Imperial Majesty, dated the 12th June of the present year, and to demand that the enforcement of the law should be openly resisted. The request made and orders given by the authorities, that the assembly should disperse, were not crowned with success, and the crowd, whilst throwing stones, compelled the police force that was present to withdraw to another church situated in the centre of the town. On being called upon to disperse a second time, the crowd replied by stoning the authorities. By this time, the troops that had been called out appeared on the scene. After a third endeavour had been made to disperse the crowd, the mounted and foot policemen were met with a shower of stones and revolver shots, during which a mounted policeman, a foot policeman, and a private of the Ashanduz Reserve Regiment were wounded; whereupon the troops opened fire, and the crowd immediately dispersed. Up to the present it has been ascertained that seven persons were killed and twenty-seven were wounded."

I have it on good authority that the above official version of the conflict between the Armenian population of the town of Elizavetpol and the troops does not, by far, represent the exact state of affairs, and that the collision that took place assumed the nature of a pitched battle, which lasted several hours, during which many more persons fell on both sides than the authorities are willing to admit.

I understand that disturbances of a similar nature took place at Tiflis on Sunday last, the 31st August, the particulars of which, however, have not reached me yet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 113.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 15.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September* 17, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 13 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the disturbances referred to therein, which took place at Tiflis on the 13th instant, were confined to the collection, after service, in the Churchyard of the Armenian Cathedral of that city, of about 2,000 Armenians, who

commenced to distribute Proclamations of a seditious character in the Armenian language; the crowd, at the same time, attacked the policemen who were present within the inclosure and commenced to beat them. A police officer, with a force of police that was stationed in the street outside the inclosure, endeavoured to rescue the policemen inside, but were met with a shower of stones and revolver shots, to which the police replied by detached revolver shots. Shortly afterwards, the Police Master, accompanied by several mounted policemen, appeared on the scene, and, with the assistance of a detachment of Cossacks, the disturbance was brought to a close.

Several members of the police force received injuries during the affray and one Armenian was mortally wounded.

On the 11th instant an explosion took place at Kars in a house in a street situated at the back of the barracks occupied by the Kuba Regiment of Infantry.

The apartment in which the explosion took place was occupied by M. Tanejoff, an Armenian; and three other Armenians, one of whom was an American citizen named John Nahilan, who had arrived at Kars a few days previous to the catastrophe, were also in the apartment at the time of the explosion.

The inquiry held into the circumstances under which the occurrence took place has elicited that the explosion was the consequence of the bursting of some dynamite shells which were being clandestinely filled in the apartment occupied by Tanejoff, and in which thirty-eight copper hand shells, three caps of fulminating quicksilver, fuses, gelatine, glycerine, and other appliances and ingredients for manufacturing shell were discovered.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 114.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 26.)

(No. 16.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September* 18, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that between the 11th and 13th instant the police inspector of the First Police District of this town, accompanied by a policeman, on several occasions presented himself at the residence of the Armenian priest, Malhassianz, and produced a copy of the Russian text and Armenian translation of the Regulations promulgated on the 12th June last concerning the confiscation of the property belonging to the Armenian Church, in order that the priest might become acquainted with the provisions of that law. The inspector, at the same time, called upon the priest to surrender the Batoum church estates and all books relating to the administration of their property.

The priest, however, persistently and categorically refused to take any official notice of the law in question, and stated that in doing so he was acting in strict conformity with the orders given him by his superior, the Rev. Mr. Nicrarchiques, who was away at Etchmiadzin, but who, previous to his departure, had received a Bull from the Catholicos of all the Armenians, which contained a distinct order not to on any account deliver up church property to the State.

In view of the condition of affairs thus created General Driagin, the Governor of the province, deputed, on the 14th instant, a civil engineer named Marcossiantz, who, although of Armenian origin, is employed in the Russian Government service, to act as intermediary between him and the Armenian community of the town, for the purpose of informing the members of it, that the authorities were compelled to enforce the newly promulgated Regulations in respect to the confiscation of the estates and funds of the church, that on the morrow, viz., the 15th instant, the transfer would have to take place, and he ventured to hope no resistance would be offered to the authorities appointed to carry out the provisions of the law, as his Excellency would hold the Armenian community of the town at large responsible for all and any acts of violence which might occur.

The more prominent members of the community assembled at the apartments of Mr. Marcossiantz, and came to the decision that they would use their utmost endeavours to persuade the working classes to abstain from making a demonstration, seeing that the minds of all Armenians were, under the present painful circumstances, so very excited that the least imprudence might lead to reprisals of a grave character and to much bloodshed. The Governor, at the same time, in order to alleviate the situation, undertook not

to send the functionaries charged with the taking over of the property to the precincts of the church. This promise was, however, subsequently not kept.

The leading members of the community, after considerable trouble and much loss of time, prevailed upon the labouring classes to desist from making any demonstration, and at 9 A.M. on the 15th the priest was led away from the church by a police officer and conveyed to the police station, where he was called upon to hand over to the authorities all documents and books relating to the property of the church. This he peremptorily refused to do during the absence of his chief at Etchmiadzin, and here the matter, I understand, now rests; but it is much feared that we have not heard the last of the incident, and that before long serious trouble will break out.

Should this be the case, the general opinion seems to be that the expected conflict between the people and the authorities at this port will, in their intensity and gravity, far surpass the disturbances which have been taking place during the past few days in the other principal towns of the Trans-Caucasus, seeing that the Georgian element, which claims to have many accounts to square with the authorities, is almost sure to make common cause with the Armenians, and then the carnage will be terrible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 115.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received September* 26.)

(No. 17.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September* 19, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to herewith transmit to your Lordship, in translation, the official version, as published in the newspaper "Kavkaz," of disturbances that took place at Kars and Baku on the 15th instant, when the Russian Government officials presented themselves to take over the property of the Armenian churches, in virtue of the Decree of His Imperial Majesty, promulgated on the 12th June last.

I am informed, on most trustworthy authority, that the number of victims in killed and wounded in both towns is very great.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

Inclosure in No. 115.

Extracts from the Newspaper "Kavkaz."

(Translation.)

ON the 15th instant, at 10·30 A.M., the officials appointed to take over the Armenian church property in the town of Kars, commenced to enforce the law of the 12th June last, when suddenly the bells of the Armenian Surp-Nshan and Blessed Virgin Churches in that town were rung, and a large crowd of Armenians immediately surrounded them and collected in great numbers on the roofs and in the windows of the adjacent houses. The mounted and foot policemen called upon the crowd to disperse, but the usual shower of stones and revolver shots were discharged at them, and they were compelled to withdraw. A reserve force of mounted police and two sotnias of the Yeisk Cossacks were immediately called, and the Governor of the province placed himself in command of them. This force was also met with showers of stones from an increasing crowd, whereupon the troops fired and eventually succeeded in clearing the churchyard and adjoining houses of their occupants, and a company of fortress artillery arriving on the spot during the affray was placed in charge of the ground. There were many killed and wounded on both sides. A crowd of Armenians also assembled at the Church of the Blessed Virgin, but the troops present succeeded in dispersing it without resorting to the assistance of their fire-arms.

On the 15th instant, at Baku, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, at the sound of the church bells, a large crowd of Armenians assembled within the precincts of the local Armenian church. The police immediately invited the crowd to disperse, but was met with a shower of stones and revolver shots, firing also taking place out of the windows of the church building. Two sotnias of Cossacks and a company of the Salian Reserve

Regiment of Infantry were immediately called out. The troops were stoned and fired at, and the crowd continuing to maintain a heavy fire retreated into the church, removing all their dead and wounded with them, thereupon the Cathedral was immediately surrounded by the troops. Forty-five of the rioters were arrested, but the bulk of the remainder made good their escape.

A large number of rifles and revolvers were discovered concealed in the church, and considerable quantities of loaded and exploded cartridges were taken away by the troops from under the altars.

One officer and four privates were wounded, and a sailor of the steamer "Geok Tepe," belonging to the Imperial Russian navy, was accidentally killed during the disturbances. The assistant police-master also received injuries in endeavouring to suppress the rising, but it is not known how many persons of the crowd were killed and wounded.

No. 116.

Mr. Findlay to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 101. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Alexandria, September 18, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to refer to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 485, Confidential, of the 10th ultimo, which has reached me in the Confidential print, inclosing a despatch from Acting Vice-Consul Abela, and a Memorandum by Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, respecting rumours of an intention on the part of the Turkish Government to construct a branch of the Hedjaz Railway from Ma'an to Akaba, with possibly a further branch to El Arish.

There seems no doubt that Akaba is now regarded as belonging to the Turks.

Up to the issue of the Firman, by which, in 1892, the Sultan confirmed the present Khedive in the possession of his titles and of the Egyptian territories, the fort at Akaba was garrisoned by Egyptian soldiers. At that time the Sultan resumed possession of Akaba, Mowila, Diba, and El Wej, which, till then, had been held by Egypt. Accordingly on the 13th April, 1892, the Egyptian Government steamer "Aida" took the garrison of the fort at Akaba, consisting of one officer and ten men, on board, and transferred them to a fort which had been constructed for them at Monabi. At the same time, two brass muzzle-loading guns with their ammunition were transported to Monabi. The latter place is situated just south of the 29° of north latitude, on the western shore of the Gulf of Akaba. Count Gleichen, late Director of the Egyptian Intelligence Department, in a letter dated the 2nd July, 1903, thus describes the eastern frontier of Egypt in the Sinaitic peninsula:—

"A line from a point a little to the east of Rafeh on the Mediterranean Sea, running in a south-east direction to Akaba (at the head of the Gulf of Akaba), but not including that town, forms the eastern boundary for map purposes. No delimitation on the ground has yet taken place. From Akaba to the 22nd parallel the Red Sea littoral forms the boundary."

There is no doubt whatever that El Arish is well within Egyptian territory.

A railway from Ma'an, or Medain Salih, a distance of 100 miles, to Akaba would enable Turkish pilgrims and Turkish troops to reach the Red Sea ports without passing through the Suez Canal, and would thus save payment of the Canal dues.

From the Egyptian point of view this might have some advantage, as they would presumably have their own quarantine station at Akaba, or elsewhere, and this would relieve the strain on the staff and resources of the quarantine station at Tor.

As regards the proposed line from Akaba to El Arish, or its neighbourhood, it would appear that its object must be strategical, but, considering the inhospitable and unattractive character of the Sinaitic peninsula, it is hard to imagine that the Turks have any intention to encroach in that direction; the difficulties of marching troops through such a howling wilderness for an attack on lower Egypt must always be enormous, and would be enhanced by both bases being exposed to naval attack.

The solution of the question suggested by Colonel Maunsell, the extention of the Egyptian frontier so as to include Akaba, is certainly simple, but it savours of the sin of removing one's neighbour's landmark, and I venture to think such a step unadvisable.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE C. FINDLAY.

No. 117.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 30.)

(No. 602. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, September 25, 1903.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 581 of the 18th September, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from Mr. Acting Consul-General Richards, at Beyrout, as to the situation there consequent on recent disorders and the steps taken by him for the return of the refugees.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 117.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 116. Confidential.)

Sir, *Beyrout, September 18, 1903.*

WITH reference to my telegram, Confidential, of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that I hear on good authority that the French and Russian Consuls-General, but more especially the former, have used their influence to induce the Christians (mostly Maronites, to the number, it is said, of 20,000), who fled to various parts of the Lebanon in consequence of the disturbances in the Masseitbeh and Ras-en-Neba' quarters, to refuse to return to Beyrout on the ground that neither their lives nor their property are safe in this city, and that, although every effort has been made by Nazim Pasha to show them that their fears are groundless.

The policy of my French colleague in encouraging this movement may, I think, be explained only in the way in which I have attempted to account for what is really on any other ground quite inexplicable. He was undoubtedly much annoyed that he as well as his colleagues of Germany and Russia should have been absent from Beyrout at the time of the occurrence of the anti-Christian movement, although, considering that these gentlemen habitually pass the whole of the summer in the Lebanon, only coming down here on very rare occasions, such a feeling of annoyance is really somewhat ridiculous.

M. de Sercez is also undoubtedly aware that French prestige in general, and his own personal influence in particular, have waned very considerably in Syria of late years, and he may have thought that by showing extraordinary solicitude for the welfare and interests of his protégés at a time of panic, he might regain some of the popularity which his country and he have lost. By his advice and through his influence all the Maronite convents and monasteries throughout north Lebanon were thrown open to these poor foolish refugees, who were taken in and fed by thousands at the expense of Maronite church funds. This has been going on now for the last ten days; but quite recently, I am glad to say, the folly of staying out there on the mountain side when they might be looking after their houses and all they contain and attending to their various businesses has begun to dawn upon them, so that in spite of the interested and selfish intriguers and agitators, who are luring them on with false hopes and specious promises, they are beginning to return to Beyrout. There has been a great deal of very foolish talk going on, to the effect that the Christians should not return to Beyrout until and unless they obtain certain guarantees from the Vali not only for their personal security both for life and property, but for the immediate adoption of certain measures, such as the appointment of a Christian Assistant (Mu'avin) to the Vali, of a Christian Commandant of the Gendarmerie, of a Christian Chief of the Police, and the enrolment of large numbers of Christians in the police force—projects of reform, in short, which, however admirable in themselves, are, for the most part, quite unimaginable in this country at the present time and under existing circumstances.

Mgr. Dibs, the Resident Maronite Bishop in Beyrout, came to see me the other day, and tried, most ingeniously, to induce me to express my approval of the programme above mentioned, and it was with difficulty that I got him to see (at least I hope that my arguments convinced him) that this is certainly not the moment to moot such projects in

this country. I pointed out to the Bishop that Nazim Pasha, whom I know personally to be a capable, upright, and energetic man, is doing his utmost to punish the guilty Moslems, restore order and security for life and property, and inspire confidence in the population generally, and that it is our duty to help and not embarrass him in what is likely to prove a very arduous and, certainly for a Mussulman functionary, a most invidious task. I said that personally I had every hope, I might even say every conviction, that the Acting Vali would be successful, and, therefore, the sooner the Christian refugees returned to Beyrout, and so put an end to this state of fear, doubt, unrest, and excitement, the better for us all.

Yesterday I had a visit from Mgr. Diriyan, the "Vicaire" of the Maronite Patriarch, who came, accompanied by a priest, to express to me, as, of course, to some, if not all, of my colleagues, his Beatitude's gratitude for the action I had taken in the matter of the recent anti-Christian riots. I told the Bishop that I was glad to have been of any service to the poor victims of Moslem violence, and, at the same time, I took the opportunity of expressing an earnest hope that the refugees would return very shortly to Beyrout, where, I assured him, we—my colleagues and myself—would make every possible effort to see that they were undisturbed. I think Mgr. Diriyan was convinced of the reasonableness of my arguments, and I gathered from what he said that he would do what he could to put the matter to his co-religionists in its proper light. I might mention here what your Excellency will hardly credit, and that is, that some hare-brained, not to say mischievous, Christian enthusiasts are actually advocating the annexation of Beyrout to the Lebanon, in order to avoid the recurrence of any such unfortunate incidents as those of Masseitbeh and Ras-en-Neba'! This was mentioned to me the other day by the Vali, and has been repeated in my hearing to two other different and totally independent quarters. Fortunately, the Vali is just the man to appreciate at its right value such random, foolish, frothy chatter, but he could hardly be blamed if he reported it to Constantinople, and so allowed it to influence the attitude which he has decided to adopt at this somewhat critical juncture. I should state, moreover, that the Vali informs me (and this I know to be a fact) that the Moslems, who gave him such a warm welcome on his arrival, have changed their attitude towards him considerably, and are now grumbling about his partiality for the Christians and oppression of men of his own faith! This is chiefly owing to the fact that he has had, up till now, some thirty-five Moslems thrown into prison, eleven of them on charges of murder and murderous attacks, and twenty-four on charges either of themselves plundering or of being in possession of articles plundered from Christian houses.

There can be no doubt that the Moslem pressure now being brought to bear upon the Vali is very considerable, and he has yielded to it to the extent of writing and telegraphing to Muzaffer Pasha to request him to do all he can to effect the arrest of certain Christians, two of whom, at all events, are notorious assassins, who are known to have killed Moslems and subsequently fled to the mountain, where, the Vali complains, they enjoy absolute immunity from punishment, some of them being actually sheltered and protected in various convents and other religious establishments. I am afraid this accusation is not altogether unfounded, at all events in one case, that of a certain Elias Halebi, who has undoubtedly assassinated many Moslems, and who, nevertheless, is so sure of general sympathy and protection throughout the Lebanon, where he is looked upon as a hero, that it appears to be almost impossible to effect his arrest.

As regards one statement in my last telegram, I am not even now in a position to state with absolute certainty that my French colleague requested the presence of a ship or ships of war. All that I know is that he was in (cypher) telegraphic correspondence with Toulon, and that since then the French Mediterranean fleet has left that port for Eastern waters. That the intention of making such an application was at one time cherished seems almost certain, and that, in view of the amelioration in the state of affairs here, it was subsequently abandoned, seems equally probable.

I should state in conclusion that Nazim Pasha has dismissed the Chief of Police, and has appointed in his place a certain Aziz Effendi, First Commissary of Police in Damascus, from which city he has brought him here. He has also dismissed from office and indicted for venality and malversation a certain Abdurrahman Effendi Hût, Chief Secretary of the Idara Mejliss, the "jackal" of the ex-Vali in all his corrupt dealings, and a man of notoriously evil reputation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 118.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 30.)

(No. 603.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 25, 1903.*

IN my despatch No. 550 of the 10th September, I had the honour to report to your Lordship that certain new taxes were to be introduced in the Empire, one of which was a tax of 10 piastres a head on cattle, &c. I now inclose copy of the notification of this tax, published in the local press, as also a despatch received from His Majesty's Acting-Consul at Erzeroum, reporting local discontent at the heavy increase of taxation caused by this tax, which falls especially hard on the peasant classes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 118.

Extract from the "Ikdam," September 24, 1903.

BY order of the Ministry of Finance it is notified that, in virtue of an Imperial Iradé, a tax will in future be levied as follows:—On all horses, mares, and colts in Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire, as well as camels, buffaloes, mules, oxen, and cows (except on the young under two years old) of 10 piastres per head; on donkeys, of 3 piastres; the pig-tax to be raised to 10 piastres. Next year domestic animals are to be numbered with sheep, but for this year they will be numbered in September in accordance with the sheep-tax prescriptions.

Inclosure 2 in No. 118.

Acting-Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September 15, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that considerable dissatisfaction is evident at the heavy increase of taxation, the tax of 10 piastres per head on cattle and horses falling especially hard on the peasant classes.

The critical position of the Ottoman Empire gives rise to disloyal murmurs in many quarters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 119.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 30.)

(No. 608. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 25, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 602 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith decypher of a telegram which I have received from the Acting British Consul-General at Beyrout, respecting the deplorable impression produced in that city by the appointments of Reshid Bey, the dismissed Vali, to be Vali of Broussa, and of the Vali of Broussa to replace Nazim Pasha, whose temporary appointment to the Governor-Generalship of Beyrout gave such great satisfaction.

I have not considered it advisable to do more than point out to the Sublime Porte that it appeared regrettable that Nazim Pasha, who had done so much to restore confidence and tranquillity, should be removed before the situation had assumed its normal state.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 119.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

Beyrout, September 21, 1903.

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR Excellency's telegram of the 18th September. General impression created here by the news of these appointments is most deplorable both among better class of Moslems and all Christians, who consider by promoting instead of punishing the ex-Vali on the very day of his arrival at Constantinople his outrageous conduct is not only condoned but approved.

Present Vali is distressed and mortified beyond words; considers himself as disapproved because he condemned his predecessor's conduct officially in the strongest possible language, and assured my Italian colleague after such a report ex-Vali would never be employed again. All the lowest Moslems are insolent and triumphant, and rejoice at impotence of Consular Corps and strength shown by their champion and protector.

News obtainable here as to the antecedents of the new Vali, especially when he was Governor-General of Sivas, are unfavourable, as he is said to be obstinate, corrupt, and fanatical.

In any case if this appointment cannot be cancelled and the present Vali, or some one equally reliable, appointed here, cannot your Excellency obtain prolongation of the existing régime for some months, so that present energetic action may not be cut short? If his successor should adopt different attitude state of things here would be very grave.

Moslems sent a telegram to the Sultan four days ago, viâ Cyprus, complaining that present Vali has imprisoned only Moslems (which is true); but a considerable number of Christians and Moslems of the better class are now telegraphing to Sultan begging that present Vali may remain here.

No. 120.

Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 5.)

St. Petersburgh, October 1, 1903.

(No. 307.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith an interesting Memorandum which has been prepared by Mr. Beaumont on the subject of the Armenians in Trans-Caucasia.

The Armenian element in that province is powerful, not only from its numbers, but from its intelligence. It is the special object of the hatred of all the various nationalities which inhabit the district, and especially of the small Russian governing class. The Armenian Church has for long been regarded with suspicion and dislike by the Holy Synod, and the obstinate character of the leaders precludes the hope of conversion to the Orthodox faith.

The Governor, Prince Galitzin, has been urging for years that the Government must take some steps against the Armenian Church organization to prevent its using its funds for political purposes. M. de Witte opposed this proposal on the grounds of the economical difficulties which would probably ensue. His prognostications have proved correct. The oil wells at Baku have been the scene of continual disorders, which appear to have extended throughout the province. Sir Charles Scott has received recently a communication from the English Manager of one of the oil Companies at Baku, stating that the force of Cossacks has been called in, and that they are given full powers to ride down, beat, and if necessary shoot, the Armenian rioters. He himself had been the object of a brutal and unprovoked assault on the part of two Cossacks. He describes the scenes in Baku as "passing description," and the whole town as the scene of continual disorders.

I would venture to add that the present action of the Russian Government is especially interesting if viewed in the light of the attitude taken by Prince Lobanoff at the time of the Armenian massacres.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Inclosure in No. 120.

Memorandum respecting the Armenian Church Property.

THE opposition to the execution of the Law of the 12th (25th) June, handing over to the Government the property of the Armenian Church, whether in funds or land, still continues. Riots have already been reported from Elisabetpol and Tiflis, and now similar reports have come in from Kars and Baku.

At the latter place on the 15th there was a conflict between the police and the crowd, and the military were called in. The soldiers, being received with stones and revolver shots, fired on the crowd. The number of casualties has not been ascertained, but there was at least one victim, a seaman of the Russian Navy, who appears to have been accidentally passing. The rioters took refuge in the Armenian Cathedral, from where they were driven by a detachment of Cossacks. Forty-five arrests were made and some arms confiscated.

At Kars also stones were thrown and revolver shots fired at the soldiers. One of the rioters was killed and 77 arrests were made, including two priests.

The "Novoe Vremya" calls on the Armenian Archbishop to publicly express his disapproval of the armed resistance which the Armenians are offering to the confiscation of their property, and states plainly that resistance is quite useless. Do the Armenians wish, it asks, to be sent back to Turkey, whence Russia has received 10,000 refugees who sought the protection of Russian law, but are now taking up arms against their protectors?

The new Law seems to be the result of apprehension of the growing power of the Armenian Church in the Caucasus, and to the suspicion or conviction that Armenian influence and the funds of the Armenian Church have been used in connection with the constantly recurring strikes and disturbances in this part of the Russian Empire. The Armenian churches at Moscow and St. Petersburgh have been specially exempted from the operation of the Law, of which the following are the main provisions:—

The confiscated property is administered, if in funds by the Ministry of Interior (Foreign Cults Department), and if in land by the Ministry of Agriculture and Imperial Domains. After deduction of 10 per cent. for cost of administration by the Ministry of Agriculture, and of 5 per cent. by the Ministry of Interior for the formation of a subsidiary Armenian Church fund, to be employed on lines like those observed for the distribution of a similar Roman Catholic clergy fund, the balance is handed over by the Ministry of Interior to the ecclesiastical foundations from which the property and funds were taken.

The sites of churches, monasteries, houses of the clergy, ecclesiastical buildings, schools, &c., are exempted from the operation of the Law, as are also churchyards, and inclosures, gardens and fields not leased out to others, and not exceeding 8 acres in extent.

Should any doubt or dispute arise as to whether any particular property belonging to the clergy or an ecclesiastical foundation shall be taken over by the Government, the decision rests with the Minister of Interior.

A joint Committee of the Ministers of Interior, of Agriculture, and of Public Education is to decide the Church property, the revenues of which are to be directly applied to educational purposes and for the maintenance of Armenian educational establishment, and the revenue so assigned are placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Education.

It is said that the Council of Ministers was far from being unanimously in favour of the Law, which obtained the Imperial sanction on the recommendation of the Minister of Interior and a small minority.

September 30, 1903.

No. 121.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 626.)
Constantinople, October 1, 1903.

My Lord,

REFERRING to my despatch No. 618 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout reporting further as to the recent disorders there and the appointment of a new Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 121.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 117.)
Beyrout, September 23, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 18th instant and my telegram of the 21st instant, I have the honour to report that the news of the nomination of Reshid Bey to the Vilayet of Broussa and that of Ibrahim Khalil Pasha to this vilayet has been received here with mingled feelings first of incredulity and then of dismay and consternation.

That the ex-Vali, who is well known to be strenuously and systematically supported at the Palace by a personage whose influence in the highest quarters is practically supreme, would ultimately obtain another post was foreseen. But that he should not have been kept a single day waiting for his promotion (for such in reality is the effect of his transfer), that he should have received the reward of his "loyalty and devotion" (so characterized in a telegram received by Reshid Bey from the Sultan on the eve of his departure from Beyrout) on the very day of his arrival at Constantinople, even his best and most sanguine friends could not have dared to hope. The explanation is not, of course, very far to seek for those who know what a large sum in cash Reshid Bey took away with him from here and the special weight which is attached to such solid arguments in certain high quarters. The appointment becomes still more intelligible when it is remembered that Reshid Bey posed as the champion and protector of Moslems against Christians: not but what all the better-class Moslems detested him and his methods as cordially as the Christians, but by protecting and encouraging, in their criminal propensities, the very dregs and riffraff of the Moslem population and by ignoring the complaints of the Christians, who were their victims, he became known in Constantinople, and more especially in those quarters where such a reputation would stand him in good stead in the hour of need, as a valiant defender of Islam against the claims and pretensions of Christianity.

Moreover, after being Vali of Beyrout for six years, during which time no serious well-concerted general measures have been taken by the people as a whole to complain of, much less to get rid of, him, he might well argue, with a certain degree of plausibility, that it was rather hard that his whole career should be cut short and his reputation blasted because he was unable to foresee and so prevent the occurrence of an attack by Moslems on a Christian quarter. I am putting the matter from his point of view and in the most favourable light for him, as, in fact, he no doubt contrived to have it presented to his Sovereign.

Nazim Pasha's dismay and mortification on hearing the news were very painful to witness. He had, it would appear, made up his mind (so I am informed by my Italian colleague) that in view of the very strongly-worded telegraphic reports which he had sent to Constantinople in condemnation of Reshid Bey's conduct, it was impossible that the latter should ever be employed again, at all events, in an administrative post of any importance.

So thoroughly persuaded is he of the correctness of this view, that he declares it as his conviction that some of his telegrams can never have reached the Sultan. He is naturally also very despondent, because, as he points out, logically enough, that if the Sultan approves of Reshid Bey's conduct, which His Majesty evidently does, it is impossible that he should, at the same time, be equally pleased with himself (Nazim Pasha), who has not only reversed all the acts of his predecessor, but has animadverted on them in his official despatches to his Sovereign in the strongest possible language. Nazim Pasha expresses the utmost regret that he should have been summoned here to restore order out of chaos, only to meet with tacit disapproval, and declares that he will never again undertake such a thankless and invidious task.

It is an infinite pity that Nazim Pasha, who has shown very great energy, activity, and impartiality in the action which he has hitherto taken, should have his ardour damped and his sense of justice crushed so completely at the very outset of his mission. How can it be expected that a Turkish functionary in his position, where opportunities of enriching himself at the expense of the general public are of almost daily occurrence, should continue to be honourable and incorruptible, as Nazim Pasha most undoubtedly and notoriously is, if he sees a man like Reshid Bey rewarded instead of punished for his misdoings? Surely he will be almost more than human if he continues to be an honest man!

Among Christians generally, as well as the better class of Moslems, the feelings of astonishment and dismay are universal, and it is felt that the ex-Vali's triumph is complete, for, although he was obliged to leave Beyrout at very short notice, he has been promoted, without a day's delay, to one of the pleasantest, if not one of the most important, vilayets in the Empire.

As regards Ibrahim Khalil Pasha, in reality, very little is known of him here beyond the fact that he was at one time the Vali of Van, and subsequently transferred to Sivas, where, in fact, he was Governor-General at the time of the Armenian massacres. From this it has been inferred by some that he was in some way responsible for what happened then, though they are, I believe, in nowise justified in making such insinuations. Be that as it may, a most unfavourable impression as to Khalil Pasha's personality has gained ground with the public in general, who appear to be convinced that his nomination is a most unwise and unfortunate one for them. Personally, I have spoken about Khalil Pasha to three persons, one of whom is a Turkish official of high standing and another an English gentleman, and all of whom know the Pasha well, and certainly their account of him is not very favourable, seeing that he is described as corrupt, despotic, and, by two of my informants at least, as at heart a fanatic. I mention this merely in support of the statement made by me in the telegram, as, of course, your Excellency has the best sources of information on this subject at your disposal.

As reported in my telegram, some Moslems of the more fanatical and less reasonable category telegraphed to the Sultan some six days ago from Cyprus, to complain that Nazim Pasha has so far arrested and imprisoned Moslems, only by which they gave it to be understood that he is not impartial, that he has marked Christian sympathies and tendencies, and that they could not hope to obtain justice from him. It is undoubtedly true that, so far, only Moslems have been arrested, for the simple reason, as Nazim Pasha pointed out to me, that in the affairs of Masseitbeh and Ras-en-Naba' the Moslems were entirely to blame, being the aggressors. As regards the murders of Moslems committed by Christians at Beit Merri, beyond Mezná and elsewhere, the assassins have taken refuge in the Lebanon, where Muzaffer Pasha, at Nazim Pasha's urgent request, is making every effort (to this I can bear witness) to have the guilty persons, including the notorious Elias Habbi and, in a less degree, Ghandour Zreick, hunted down and arrested.

Other Moslems, as well as all the leading Christians, the various spiritual chiefs being at the head of the movement, are now engaged in drawing up a telegraphic address to the Sultan, in which they express complete satisfaction at the steps hitherto taken by Nazim Pasha to restore order and confidence, and add that they trust he will be allowed to remain here, at all events for a time, if not permanently, for the good of the city and province. As regards this latter point, it would appear that some of the intending signatories have evinced a certain amount of hesitation, not so much because they do not at heart desire that Nazim Pasha should be kept here, but because, as they somewhat shrewdly remark, such requests generally have the very opposite effect to what was intended.

Personally, I would beg to submit to your Excellency that to remove Nazim Pasha, say, in a week's time, cannot but have a most disastrous effect, however good Khalil Pasha's intentions may be, and I will grant that they are the best. Every one here has complete confidence in Nazim Pasha; he has shown them already what he can do, and their knowledge of his integrity, energy, and sense of justice are sufficient guarantees that he will carry to a successful termination his beneficient work. Moreover, his prestige is such that his very presence here keeps the unruly, turbulent, lawless element in complete subjection. Remove him and the American squadron—which cannot, of course, stay here indefinitely—and in twenty-four hours I would not undertake to say what may not happen. Of Khalil Pasha practically nothing is known by the general public, and yet an

impression has been created that he is not to be relied upon! Of course, if he be a really "strong" man, that impression would soon disappear; if not, it would remain, and perhaps, owing to some trifling indiscretion, gain ground.

Speaking generally, only one incident of any importance has occurred here since I last wrote. Some five days ago a young Christian went out early in the morning to shoot small birds just outside the town on what is known as the "Raml" (sand), and while so engaged was hailed by five Moslems, who, as they advanced towards him, told him to stop.

Not liking the look of these men, who all carried guns, the Christian turned round and began to run away, whereupon the Moslems fired at but failed to hit him. The young man came into town and related the affair to a relative, who went at once and informed the Vali.

The latter sent out mounted police forthwith to search for and arrest the culprits, in which, however, they were unsuccessful.

On the afternoon of the same day a Moslem was seen in one of the main streets of the city by some policemen, who recognized him as one of the very men who was "wanted" for the outrage of the morning.

The man, seeing that he was recognized, ran away, while the police as promptly gave chase. The fugitive, seeing that his pursuers were gaining on him, drew a revolver from his girdle, turned round and began to fire on the police, who, nothing daunted, continued their pursuit. After firing four or five shots, none of which took effect either on his pursuers or on the general public—which, considering that the scene of the chase is a public thoroughfare, is remarkable enough—the man was overtaken, knocked down, and overpowered.

I should mention that a cab horse was struck and, I believe, killed by one of the bullets. The police showed considerable courage and *sangfroid* in this affair, and the Vali has promised to reward them. As a rule, when one of these armed ruffians begins shooting at large here—a by no means uncommon occurrence—the police give him a very wide berth.

On the following day, I am glad to say, the four other persons implicated in the outrage were arrested, so that public confidence, which had been somewhat shaken by the incident, has been re-established.

Since then there has been no disturbance whatever of the public peace, the prompt action of the police in this last affair having produced a most wholesome and sobering effect on the lawless and quarrelsome element in this city.

I might mention, in proof of this, what the International Sanitary Inspector was telling me a day or two ago, viz., that the mere presence of Nazim Pasha here and the order and discipline which he has introduced among the boatmen, porters, and others who ply their trades along the quayside have brought about such a complete and rapid transformation that he, who is in constant communication with them, can hardly believe they are the same men. From turbulent, arrogant, and extortionate bravos who fleeced their clients, more especially the Lebanese emigrants, with a dare-naught shamelessness which sometimes surprised and disgusted natives of the country who were accustomed to witness it, they have become quiet, orderly, courteous, and submissive men with whom it is a pleasure to have to do.

In other parts of the city I have no doubt that a similar tale could be told, and this being so, I again beg to submit to your Excellency that it would be an infinite pity to remove at once a man who has done, and is doing, such good work.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 122.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 627.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 1, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting the resignation of the Russian Consul-General at Damascus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 122.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 122.)
Sir, *Beyrout, September 25, 1903.*

MAY I be allowed to mention to your Excellency—although, strictly speaking, it is a matter which should have been reported on by Mr. Acting-Consul Monahan—that M. Bélaiew, the Russian Consul-General at Damascus, has quite recently resigned his post and left the Consular Service, having accepted the position of Secretary of the Russian Palestine Society, which, as your Excellency is aware, is under the Presidency of the Grand Duke Sergius. My ex-colleague, who, as I have reported on many occasions, has shown very great energy, zeal, and intelligence in promoting and extending the interests and influence of that Society in this country, and so in spreading Russian educational, religious, and political propaganda to a degree which has not been approached by any of his predecessors or colleagues in other parts of the country, has now obtained a post where his knowledge and experience in these matters will be most valuable to his country. I have little doubt that the Palestine Society will henceforth show an even greater and more intelligent activity than it has in the past.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 123.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 629.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 2, 1903.*

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the situation in Sassun, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, stating that orders have been sent from Constantinople to the Military Commander at Moush to attack the Armenian revolutionaries in Sassun as soon as the nomad Kurds have left the mountains.

As soon as I received Mr. Hampson's telegram referred to in the despatch I caused inquiries to be made at the Porte with regard to the truth of the report. The Minister of War stated, in reply, that the Commander at Moush had not received orders to attack the Armenian revolutionaries, but simply to take proper measures for preventing such persons from entering Turkish territory. His Excellency hinted, however, that as these revolutionaries generally cross the frontier well armed, the troops might have to repel them by force.

I could not reasonably make any objection to such operations, so long as they were exclusively directed against the revolutionaries, and not allowed to endanger the lives and property of peaceful citizens.

In this connection I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, in which he incloses a translation of a letter purporting to be addressed to him by the revolutionaries at Sassun respecting the condition of the Armenian people.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—I have the honour to inclose paraphrase of a telegram just received from Mr. Hampson, reporting some fighting between the troops and Armenian revolutionaries from across the frontier.

N. R. O'C.

Inclosure 1 in No. 123.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September 18, 1903.*

AS I had the honour to inform your Excellency, by telegram, last night, I learn through official sources that orders have been sent from Constantinople to Salih Pasha, the Military Commander at Moush, to attack the Armenian revolutionaries in Sassun

as soon as the nomad Kurds have left the mountains, which is generally about the beginning of October. I am informed that the Regular troops at Moush have been reinforced from Varto, &c., and that everything is ready for the attack.

I understand that the order for active operations has resulted from Salih Pasha's exaggerated representations as to the danger from the revolutionaries. In my humble opinion the Government would have been wiser to remain inactive, by which course the revolutionaries would either have been forced to take the offensive and have been crushed, or to see their movement result in a complete fiasco. However, after the departure of the nomad tribes an attack by the troops will be comparatively unlikely to result in serious excesses; and as Rashid Pasha, the new Mutessarif, is now at Moush, it may be hoped that general order will be maintained.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 123.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)
Bitlis, September 15, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency a translation of a letter which reached me just before I left Moush, purporting to come from the revolutionaries in Sassun.

This document was accompanied by another, which professes to be an appeal from the villagers of Sassun, Talori, &c., with numerous details as to the state to which they are reduced by the oppression of the Government and the Kurdish tribes, the blockade of Sassun (which prevents their obtaining supplies), the necessity of paying taxes to the Government as well as the "Hafir" tribute to the Kurdish Aghas, and other grievances. It declares that the Government has brought an unusually large number of nomads to the mountains this year, adding: "We hear it has distributed to them regular weapons and ammunition;" that these Kurds have threatened to massacre the Armenians; that all debts owing to Moslems have been claimed; and that the fear was so great that the writers had abandoned their villages and taken to the mountains, determined to resist to the last, though aware that they are not numerous enough to overcome their opponents. They beg that their complaints may be made known to the British King and Government, asking for immediate help and the execution of the promised reforms—or at least that Turkey may be obliged to allow them to bear arms. They also say that they will make similar appeals to any Representatives of other European Governments who may come to Moush.

The letter appears to bear no actual signatures, but ends with a list of names given as those of the signatories. These names include three village Chiefs, three priests, and sixty-one villagers of Semal, Shenk, Gueliguzan, Aghpig, Shushnamesk, Khasher, Talori, Hakmank, Telalink, Pourkh, Hosnoud, Hardk, Haladink, Spaghank, Yeghgour, Heelink, and Eshkentsor.

The two letters seem to have been brought down from the mountains together, but I was unable to ascertain who conveyed them or from what sources they really come; a certain similarity, however, in the general arrangement, and the actual repetition of some phrases in both, show that the writers were acting in concert.

The revolutionaries claim to be making a last appeal to Europe before precipitating a conflict, and the conclusion of the villagers' letter is that, unless their condition is at once ameliorated, they will join in the attack on the Government.

The inaction of the revolutionaries up till the middle of September would suggest that they do not yet consider themselves ready for decisive action, and this view is confirmed by the verbal message that reached me on the 20th August, with which your Excellency is already acquainted, based professedly on a letter from Sassun, to the effect that three attempts had been made by the Kurds to challenge an attack, but without success, as the revolutionaries refused to be tempted into the open and the Kurds did not venture to assail their strongholds; adding that my presence at Moush was welcome to them as some kind of safeguard against an attack by Government troops. This last sentiment is repeated in the letter.

On the other hand, there are numerous rumours here, probable and improbable, which I regret that I cannot verify at present, pointing to preparation on the part of the revolutionaries for a movement.

It is asserted that a boatload of arms lately reached Zighag, on the west shore of Lake Van, which were at once conveyed to Mount Nimrud; that another boat brought a party of revolutionaries, who also took refuge in the crater; and that the Sassun leaders have addressed a letter to the Vali at Moush, saying that, as they have nothing to live on in the mountains, they will, if not attacked first, and if not enabled to leave on their own terms, shortly attack the troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

Inclosure 3 in No. 123.

Letter received at Moush by Vice-Consul Heathcote on September 1, 1903.

WE learn that you have come to Moush on behalf of your Government to learn from near by the condition of the Armenian people in the districts of Moush and Sassun, and to make their situation known in its true colours.

When you only touch at central places on your journey, and even then surrounded by Turkish officials, it is difficult for you to succeed in your office, because the Government will keep at a distance from you all complainants, all wretched faces, and will punish with beating and imprisonment those who dare to approach you, even while you are here. On the other hand, they will try to make everything appear peaceful and pleasant.

You can only truly fulfil your duties if, surrounded only by trusty friends, you enter Armenian villages, the distant and darker corners. There the bitter realities of Armenian life will be pictured to you in its freezing horror and its pitiable martyrdom.

Your temporary residence in Moush may perhaps hinder for a time the total extermination of Armenian nationality in Sassun; the Armenians are now besieged by the Turkish army and numberless Kurdish troops. They are at death's door. But enter the villages of the Moush plain, visit the districts of Gueni, Varto, Khinis, Boulanik, Akhlat, and the mountains and plains of Pernashen, Sassun, Kulp, Kiank, Silivan, Psank, Hazo, &c.

Pray take some trouble to note how many persons are killed in every Armenian village each year, and how many imprisoned wholly without reason; how many Armenian women, brides, and girls are kidnapped, violated, or forced to change their religion and taken to the harems of Turks and Kurds.

Pray examine the livelihood of the Armenian labouring people, why they are always hungry, famished, and naked, and where the produce goes which they gain with blood and sweat. Examine how the tax-gatherers of the Government collect the endless taxes, and the oppressive acts committed by the tithe-farmers, who are always Turks and Kurds, and the shares taken by the Kurdish Aghas and Beys from the labour of Armenians. Find some way for the Armenian leaders, the priests, and chiefs of quarters and villages to be able to tell you without fear all the deeds of violence and cruelty committed by the Turkish Government and Kurdish tribes every day, to extirpate the Armenian in his native country. Only then will you be able to form a true image of the insupportable life of the Armenian, and to draw up such statistics that you and your whole civilized world will tremble with fear and terror, and even the hardest hearted shall exclaim in anger, "Can it be pardonable, in such an age, in which civilized and philanthropic principles have made such progress, to be an indifferent and silent spectator to the total extermination of a hard-working laborious race by such unheard-of and hellish means?"

Honoured Sir, we do not seek certificates, demonstrations, or proofs to affirm our words; we leave it to you to test their reality in the way mentioned above.

We Armenian revolutionaries, the offspring of a people so ill-used, are weary of making known to your so-called civilized Governments our real internal condition, the tortures the Armenian has borne; our repeated appeals have not only brought no good: they have still more embittered our life. The Turkish Government has been encouraged by the [?] and indifference of Europe, to multiply still further its hellish methods for the extermination of the Armenians.

Dear Sir, the general massacres that took place in 1894, 1895, and 1896 have indeed weakened and enervated the forces of the Armenians for revolutionary organization, and prevented the execution of our plans; but be not deceived into thinking that under this immovable and peaceful appearance our whole effort for self-dependence is exhausted and the whole hope for freedom is dead in the Armenian. We waited thus long in the hope that Europe would count sufficient the blood that Armenians have shed, and, in accordance with

its promise and its pledged principles, would put a stop to the present hellish *régime* that dominates all Turko-Armenia. But our hopes are vain. Not one impressive or final step has been taken by the European Governments for our righteous cause, and to-day we make known to you that if the great Governments of Europe do not in some way compel the Turkish Government to the execution of the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and the plan of reforms proposed by the Governments in 1895; if they do not organize a general State from the six vilayets then separated, governed distinctly and with a Christian Governor, under the close supervision of European Governments, then, with more power and still greater force, we will begin to wage a bloody conflict against our mortal enemy, the Turkish Government.

In the near future all Armenia shall again be in confusion, floods of blood and tears shall again be shed, and the deadly strife shall continue till the Armenians at last attain their ideal or are sacrificed for their just rights on the threshold of this brilliant twentieth century.

We hereafter neither petition nor beg; we only grasp our weapons and continue trusting to fortune; but count it our duty once more to invite your attention to the present bitter condition that presses upon the people, and to show you the natural course of affairs.

But if European Governments and nations continue to neglect the humane principles which they profess and preach; if, with criminal indifference, they again betray the martyred Armenian people to the claws of the "red monster"; if they perform the part merely of a heartless spectator, as they have done until now; let future impartial history be their accuser.

(On behalf of the Armenian Revolutionists of Moush and Sassun),
(Signed) HURIRE.
TORLKOM.
VAHAN.
ANTRANIG.

(Seal, bearing a book, a spade, a pen, and a sword, surrounded by the inscription, "A. R. Alliance, Ikatnavartsarap Central Committee.")

August 13, 1903.

Inclosure 4 in No. 123.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Erzeroum, October* 2, 1903.

ON the night of the 30th September about eighty Armenians arrived in the neighbourhood of Toprak Kale, having come from across the frontier. They were met by an equal number of soldiers, and fighting went on during all the following day. The Turks lost eight killed, including the captain and a sergeant; the losses on the Armenian side are unknown.

No further news has been received to-day, and it is thought that the Armenians have recrossed the frontier.

A few cavalry and two companies of infantry were sent from here last night.

No. 124.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 630.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 2, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 629 of to-day's date, I have the honour to report that for more than a month past the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum has been forwarding to me letters he has received from Mr. K. M. Thomas, Dragoman of the Vice-Consulate at Diarbekir, who is now at Kharput, in which he mentions rumours of the gathering together and wholesale arming of Kurdish tribes, and several cases in which Armenian Christians had been massacred.

Most of Mr. Thomas' statements were too vague and doubtful to warrant any action, but in a letter dated the 4th ultimo, he reported having learnt from a reliable source that the Turks and Kurds in the city and Province of Diarbekir had purchased 20,000 rifles, guns, pistols, and other weapons during the previous month, while at the same time Christians found in possession of arms were punished and their weapons confiscated.

As this statement was of a more definite nature, I called the attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to it, pointing out the dangers which this exceptional arming of the Moslem population involved, and the evidence it gave of the unsettled state of the country.

His Excellency replied that, although in his opinion this intelligence was greatly exaggerated, he would cause it to be brought to the notice of the Minister of the Interior.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 125.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 18.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September* 23, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for the information of your Lordship, an official Report concerning two further Armenian disturbances which have recently taken place at Elizavetpol and Tiflis.

It is satisfactory to be able to report that on Sunday last, the 20th instant, while a requiem service was being held within the inclosure outside the Armenian church at Batoum, troubles similar to those referred to in the appended translation were averted exclusively through the wisdom displayed by General Driagin, the Governor of the province, who gave orders that no members of the police force should be posted anywhere near the church during the service; the consequence was that, after the conclusion of the religious ceremony, the crowd, numbering over 3,000 persons, which maintained perfect order throughout the proceedings, dispersed without creating a disturbance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

Inclosure in No. 125.

Extract from the "Kavkaz."

(Translation.)

AT Elizavetpol, on the 11th September, a crowd of local Armenians created disturbances in connection with the Decree of His Imperial Majesty, dated the 12th June last, whereby the transfer of the Armenian church property to the Administration of the civil authorities has to take place. On the troops being called out the Armenians commenced to throw stones at them, and wounded three privates. In order to put a stop to the disturbances the troops were compelled to use their firearms, after which the crowd dispersed, leaving seven men killed, and twenty-seven others wounded on the spot.

On the 13th September, at Tiflis, after service had been held in the Armenian cathedral, the clergy officiated, in the cathedral yard, in the presence of 2,000 Armenians, at a requiem service for six of the victims who fell at Elizavetpol during the Armenian disturbances that took place at that town. After the requiem service was brought to a close Priest Ter-Araratov passed his malediction on the law promulgating the confiscation of Church property; revolutionary proclamations were at the same time distributed, the crowd shouted, threw stones, and fired about forty shots into the police force that was present. The latter retaliated by firing into the air, although several persons in the crowd were wounded and one labourer mortally so. Several men belonging to the police force received injuries and one policeman was beaten. Cossacks were called out to the scene of the disorders, and succeeded in dispersing the crowd. Four of the ringleaders, among them Priest Ter-Araratov, were arrested.

No. 126.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 19.)
My Lord. *Batoum, September 24, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith translations of two Proclamations which have recently been extensively distributed among the Armenian working classes by the Caucasus Union of Working Men, during the various disturbances that have been taking place at several points in the Trans-Caucasus, and in respect to which I have, from time to time, furnished your Lordship with reports.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

Inclosure 1 in No. 126.

Proclamation to Armenians.

PROLETARIAT OF ALL NATIONS.

The Caucasian Union of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

AUTOCRACY AND THE ARMENIANS.

(Translation.)
To all Working Men and Peasants:

THE persecution of the Finns has not yet terminated, the blood of the beaten Kishineff Jews has not yet dried on the hands of the executioners, the wounds of our brethren at Mihailovo, Batoum, Baku, Odessa, Kiev, and other places, have not yet healed, and the Government of the Czar, possessed with a thirst for plunder and violence, has already stretched its paws towards the Armenians.

The Law promulgated on the 12th June last deprives Armenians of the right to administer their Church property. Up till now the Armenian people have conducted the affairs relating to such property through their elected church-wardens and priests. From to-day the Armenians have been deprived of this right. The Government of the Czar having come into possession of the Church property will dole out "relief" to the Armenian priests. With moneys belonging to the Armenian people the Government will bribe these priests. The Armenian clergy will become the docile tools of the Czar. All the better priests will be dismissed, and a whole pack of bribed preachers will be called to the altar. With all the energy of which only baseness and meanness are capable the priests of the Czar will commence to persecute the people and will poison their minds by preaching patience and resigned forbearance for all oppression on the part of the Government, landed proprietors and manufacturers.

The Armenians have understood the pernicious plans of the Czar, and have unfurled the Banner of Conflict. Their blood has already been spilt. . . . . What shall we do? Brother Social Democratists! We are the combatants of the Great Universal Army of the Proletariat, we are the enemies of all persecution and force. Always and everywhere we must defend the oppressed with all our might. In the conflict of the Armenians against arbitrariness our place is in the front ranks.

Let our Banner fly higher than all other Banners.

Let all people be inspired with our war-cry.

"Down with Autocracy!"
"Long live a Democratic Republic!"
"Down with Capitalism!"
"Long live Socialism!"

Inclosure 2 in No. 126.

Proclamation.

(Translation.)
To all unorganized Armenians, Working Men and Peasants:

BROTHER working men and peasants. We address ourselves to you. From day to day we are plundered by different factories and works and likewise in out-of-the-way villages by the manufacturer and the land-owner. The Government of the Czar has imposed upon us innumerable duties and taxes; it sucks out of us that which the manufacturer and land-owner have not yet had time to deprive us of. The Czar uses his utmost endeavours to keep us all in ignorance in order that we should patiently endure our slavery. In 1897 he took your schools, libraries, and other establishments of enlightenment from you. Now the administration of your church property is being taken away from you.

Is all this not sufficient? . . . . You are deprived of the right to refer to Tribunals for protection. It is only by struggle, by an unceasing self-denied struggle, that the working men and peasants will be able to alleviate their terrible fate. Rise, therefore, quickly for the contest! Organize yourselves; join the organized working men and peasants belonging to the Social Democratic party. Working men and peasants of all nationalities throughout Russia unite at once under the red banner of the Social Democrat. Conscientious leading men, Russians, Poles, Jews, Finlanders, Georgians, Armenians—all have understood that it is only by their combined strength that the working classes can eventually throw off the disgraceful yoke of the Czar; the land-owners and the manufacturers; hasten, therefore, also all you organized Armenians to join the ranks of the great army of the Proletariat! As brothers we shall together all rise, and the enemy shall not be a dangerous one for us! We shall depose the Czar and his hateful officials. We shall fight for a Democratic Republic, *i.e.*, for a State, the affairs of which will be administered by persons elected by the whole people. The laws will then be made and taxes established by our representatives, not by a pack of officials; we shall then have freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of meeting, of strike, and of unions; the officials will then, under the penalty of punishment being meted out to them, not be able to insult us citizens. In a word, we shall have political freedom. We shall throw off the yoke of capitalism (land-owners and manufacturers). We shall carry on a contest for socialism, *i.e.*, for that the land, factories, and works should belong to us who work; then only shall we not have rich and poor. Then only shall we obtain a free reign for labour.

"Down with Autocracy!"
"Long live a Democratic Republic!"
"Down with Capitalism!"
"Long live Socialism!"
"The Caucasian Union!"

(Printing offices of the Union.)

No. 127.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 20.)
My Lord, *Batoum, September 25, 1903.*

IN view of the treatment which the Armenians of the Caucasus are now receiving at the hands of the Russian Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a report, drawn up by me, on the circumstances which have led to the adoption of the drastic measures that are being enforced with regard to the estates of the Armenian Church, representing in all the large sum of 120,000,000 roubles in real property and about 10,000,000 roubles in cash deposited in the Government Bank.

I may here mention that great excitement continues to prevail throughout the Caucasus, and the priests, when called upon by the officials to deliver up the Church property, calmly, but distinctly, refuse to comply with the request, on the grounds that in doing so they are acting under peremptory instructions from the Catholicos.

I am informed that Etchmiadzin is closely watched by troops from all quarters of the compass, and that his Holiness, the Catholicos, is practically held as a prisoner within the precincts of his residence in that city, only a selected few being allowed to have communication with him.

The question of the advisability of removing the seat of his Holiness is being discussed by almost all Armenians in the country. Some mention Cyprus, others Egypt, as likely countries to which the Catholicos might be allowed to withdraw, but the largest proportion of Armenians are for the selection of a town in Turkish Asia Minor; this, it is held, would be a more central position for him.

A report has just reached me that very serious troubles have taken place at the town of Shusha between the Government troops and the Armenian residents, who apparently were joined by mobs of Mussulmans. The rumour says that over 600 persons have been killed on both sides. No further particulars are yet to hand.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

Inclosure in No. 127.

Report on the Armenian Church Question.

THE Armenian Church and School Laws, which were in force until recently, underwent a thorough revision on the part of the Russian Government in the year 1835, and it was then considered possible to grant to the clergy of the Armenian church throughout Russia certain autonomous rights in connection with the management of their seminaries, schools, and estates, and funds belonging to their church.

For a period, therefore, extending over sixty years the Armenian church schools were not interfered with by the Government, and the clergy belonging to the Armenian church were allowed, without molestation, to administer the schools and reap the benefits of the revenues derived from the church property, and to dispose of them as they saw fit and expedient in the interests of the Armenian community of the world at large, seeing that all Armenians, even in the remotest parts of the universe have from time immemorial liberally contributed towards the maintenance of the schools and the church.

At the various church schools the growing Armenian generation received instruction, and the seminaries prepared young men for the church. In both instances instruction was given in the Armenian language.

For some years past, however, the Russian Government, whether justly or not, it is difficult to say, has been growing somewhat suspicious of the Armenian residents of the Caucasus, on the ground, it is alleged, that they were growing too strong, and in view of the concentration of all the wealth, property, and business of the country in their hands, they were, it is pretended, developing certain political tendencies and far-reaching aspirations which formed a source of danger to the State, and the more intelligent portions of the community were alleged to have even gone so far as to seriously advocate the formation of an Armenia for the Armenians.

Whether this be so or not, suffice to say that Prince Golitzin, the Governor-General of the Caucasus, whilst strongly entertaining this view of the matter, was of the opinion that the time had come when it was necessary to adopt certain measures of restriction in order to counteract the so-called ever-increasing influence which the Armenians were supposed to be steadily acquiring in the country, and in the year 1897, after the massacres of the Armenians in Asia Minor, and the consequent large number of refugees who found their way into the Caucasus across the Russo-Turkish frontier and through other channels, the Governor-General became alarmed at the state of things which the force of circumstances was creating, and advocated the advisability of making a commencement with the restrictive measures which he proposed to adopt by first assailing the Armenian schools and subsequently their churches.

Accordingly, in the same year, we see the promulgation of the Imperial Order for the transfer of the Armenian schools, together with all their real estates and revenues derived therefrom, to the Ministry of Public Instruction. The enforcement of this measure was not allowed to pass unnoticed by the Armenian clergy, who, whilst protesting against the action of the authorities, availed themselves of the right granted

them, by the existing legislation, of appealing to the Tribunals of the country in order to prove (and almost in each instance with success) that the estates referred to above did not belong to the schools, but formed the exclusive property of the church and monasteries.

The decisions arrived at by the Tribunals in regard to this matter evidently much disappointed the Prince; after the first few law-suits had been gained by several Armenian communities in the Caucasus, he saw that by this means he would not be able to further matters in the desired direction.

A short time after this death-blow had been dealt to his scheme by the Tribunals, Prince Golitzin, never daunted, took up the cudgel in favour of another project for the confiscation of all the immovable property, revenues, and moneys belonging to the Armenian Church.

This latter plan, however, met with strong opposition on the part of two Ministers, viz., the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Imperial Domains, on the ground that a vigorous measure of this nature might breed considerable discontent amongst the Armenians of the Caucasus who would ever after remain the bitterest enemies Russia ever had. The former-mentioned Minister was of the opinion that before any definite steps in the matter were taken, the whole question should be submitted to the consideration of a Special Commission to be composed of Delegates from the Ministry of the Interior, to which the clergy of the Armenian Church in the Caucasus should also be invited, as was done when a decision was being arrived at in regard to the property belonging to the mosques, or Vakuf estates, in the Caucasus on a previous occasion when representatives of the Mussulman clergy were invited to take part in the deliberations.

On the other hand, the Minister of Imperial Domains suggested that a similar system be adopted in reference to the property of the Armenian Church in the Caucasus to that which governed the administration of the foreign monastic estates in Bessarabia, *i.e.*, that the supreme control over the immovable property and moneys of the Armenian Church should be transferred to the Ministry of the Interior, and that the economic administration of these institutions should form the concern of the Ministry of Agriculture. Prince Golitzin and the late Minister of the Interior, M. Sipiagin, also shared the opinion entertained by M. Ermoloff, Minister of Imperial Domains, and thought that it would be advisable to take the course thus suggested.

By Imperial Decree the scheme was thus submitted to a Special Commission, under the Presidency of M. Friesche. After thoroughly sifting the matter, this Commission came to the conclusion that the proposed measure, if enforced, would deal a cruel blow to the Armenian Church, and in doing so might wrongly influence the relations of the Armenian nation towards Russia, both in and out of the country. Nevertheless, the Commission recommended that as the object was to forestall any illegal actions which might be premeditated by the Armenian clergy and intellectual classes, it was possible to arrive at the same result by other means, and in order to attain this end it was proposed to deprive the Armenian Church of its autonomous character, and to establish an actual control over the revenues and expenditures of the Church. But, at the same time, in view of the obtaining condition of affairs and the reason given before, the Commission was strongly of the opinion that the present time was both premature and inopportune for enforcing restrictive measures of any kind.

M. Sipiagin was prevailed upon to look at matters in the same light as the Commission, but Prince Golitzin remained unshaken in the opinion he entertained on the subject.

The Emperor, on becoming acquainted with the results of the labours of the Commission, saw that an understanding as regards the measures to be adopted was as remote as ever. His Majesty, therefore, gave orders that the Ministry of the Interior should enter into relations with Prince Golitzin, Governor-General of the Caucasus, for the purpose of collectively working out a project which would meet the requirements of the case, in which, however, the suggestions made by Prince Golitzin on former occasions were not to be embodied.

M. Sipiagin and the Prince, after a further exchange of views on the subject, furnished His Majesty with a report which stated that, in their opinion, the only measure whereby the extraordinary behaviour and unlawful deeds of the Armenian clergy could be curtailed was by depriving them of the management of their Church property and the revenues derived therefrom and by placing them under the administration of the State. Both these gentlemen further recommended, in the event that His Majesty should share the same views on the question, that the scheme be submitted to

the Committee of Ministers, and should subsequently become law. As far back as the 21st July, 1901, this scheme was sent before the Committee referred to above, where it remained until the early part of the present year, when M. Pleve found that the time had come for enforcing the measure and thus at once restraining the self-governing liberties acquired by the clergy of the Armenian Church in virtue of the laws promulgated in the year 1835, seeing that in taking over the administration of Church properties and the revenues derived therefrom the Government would greatly minimize the danger that was threatening the Empire in consequence of the clandestine and unlawful actions of the Armenian clergy; the Minister was also of the opinion that, owing to the total incapability of the priesthood to manage their Church properties, the Armenian Church would likewise greatly benefit by the introduction of the measure.

Accordingly, on the 12th (25th) of June last this measure became law, and was promulgated on the same day, and is now being enforced with the painful result already made known through the papers.

No. 128.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 14.*)

(No. 21.) *Batoum, September 26, 1903.*

My Lord,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 20 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to furnish your Lordship herewith with translations of the correspondence that has recently taken place between the Russian Government and the Catholicos of all the Armenians, at Etchmiadzin, on the subject of the transfer of Armenian Church property and moneys to the State.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. STEVENS.

Inclosure in No. 128.

Correspondence between Russian Government and Catholicos re Transfer of Church Property.

To the Patriarch, Catholicos Mkriteh, Etchmiadzin.

(Translation.) *August 5 (18), 1903.*

HAVING become acquainted of the delay which is taking place in the execution of the Order of His Imperial Majesty, dated the 12th June, respecting Church property, I beg of your Holiness to take immediate steps in regard to this matter. All postponement, as an undutiful action against the will of the Czar, will have most serious consequences.

(Signed) PLEVE, *Minister of the Interior.*

To the Minister of the Interior, St. Petersburgh.

(Translation.) *August 6 (19), 1903.*

In view of the decision arrived at by the Committee of Ministers, the Order of His Imperial Majesty of the 12th June was promulgated without its having previously been ascertained, through me, what was the practice in analogous instances during the term of office of my predecessors concerning circumstances which may not have been taken into consideration by the Government; I, by my Order No. 958, issued on the 4th August last to the Synod, postponed for a short period of time the enforcement of the Decree of His Imperial Majesty, and requested that, as Supreme Head of the Church, I might be allowed to furnish His Imperial Majesty with a Report, embodying in it the considerations and circumstances of the present question, and

begged that I might be furnished with a copy of the whole case. The Synod, having received my Order ("Condac"), took the necessary steps to compile a Report on the subject, but Procureur Kancheli would not allow the Report to be drawn up. By this action he apparently desired, in spite of the provisions of the law, to personally predecide the form and contents of the decision of the Synod.

A Protocol in regard to this action on his part, bearing the signature of all the members of the Synod, was drawn up at the time and forwarded to me.

In view of the vital importance that the question at issue has for the whole of the Armenian Church, and the exceedingly undesirable consequences which the enforcement of the Order might have, which, among other things, is evidenced by the fact that on the 27th of July last at Alexandropol, and on the 3rd August here (at Etchmiadzin), immense crowds of all classes of society, both individually and collectively, in written Petitions daily call upon me to place at the feet of His Majesty the prayers of the whole people on the subject, I humbly request your Excellency to postpone, for a short period of time, the enforcement of the aforesaid Order of the Government, and to grant unto me the possibility of giving to His Majesty my loyal explanations on this question, and also of submitting to His Majesty the circumstances under which an equitable solution of the question may be brought about. I consider the appeal I am about to make to His Majesty to have been dictated by feelings of duty, as the Head of the Church, towards her supreme Protector, the Lord Emperor, and towards my flock.

(Signed) MKRITCH,
Catholicos of all the Armenians.

To His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

(Translation.)

Your Imperial Majesty the Lord Emperor. *August 10 (23), 1903.*

On the 6th August of the present year, I addressed myself by telegraph to State Secretary, his Excellency M. de Pleve, with the request that the enforcement of the Law passed by the Committee of Ministers, which received the Imperial sanction on the 12th June of the present year, concerning the transfer of the properties and funds belonging to the Armenian Church to the Administration of Government Institutions might be postponed, and, in complying with my request, to grant unto me the possibility of placing at the feet of your Majesty my request in regard to the aforesaid law, together with the prayers of the flock placed under my spiritual charge and of the whole of the Armenian people. Not having received a reply from the aforesaid Minister, I take the liberty of appealing directly to your Majesty with the request that I may be allowed to lay at the feet of your Majesty, in person, the intercession of the whole of the spritual Armenian flock, and to submit those important explanations and considerations concerning the enforcement of the decision of the Ministers which have been dictated to me by feelings of duty towards your Majesty and the flock placed under my care.

(Signed) MKRITCH, *Supreme Patriarch of all the Armenians, the loyal devotee of your Imperial Majesty.*

To his Holiness the Catholicos of all the Armenians, Etchmiadzin.

(Translation.) *August 12, 1903.*

On my loyally submitting the telegram of your Holiness of the 7th of the present month, His Imperial Majesty gave orders that your request for the postponement in enforcing the Decision of Ministers which received the Imperial sanction on the 12th June of the present year should not be complied with; at the same time His Majesty was pleased to hand me your telegram of the 10th August. I, therefore, point out to you in greater detail the possible consequences of further obstruction, this remark likewise applies to your personal representations to His Majesty.

(Signed) PLEVE, *Minister of the Interior.*

Your Holiness,

Dear Archpriest, *Ministry of the Interior, August* 13, 1903.

In continuation of my telegram of the 12th instant, I have the honour to inform you that when I was communicating the contents of your telegram of the 7th instant to the Emperor His Majesty was pleased to draw attention to the irregular actions on the part of your Holiness in regard to the execution of the Order of the Committee of Ministers of the 12th June last. The Order ("Condac") of the 4th August to the Synod of Etchmiadzin to delay the execution of the Imperial Will is considered to be a great violation of your loyal duty. It was the pleasure of His Majesty to likewise dwell upon the fact that the present instance has latterly not been the only one in which the Etchmiadzin Patriarchate has deviated from the example set by the law-abiding actions of the former Supreme Chairman of the Armeno-Gregorian Church, wherefore he has given me orders to the effect that should further non-compliance to the Imperial Will on the part of the Armeno-Gregorian clergy be continued, I was to consider the question as to how far the order of things created by Russian Monarchs in regard to the management of the affairs of the Armeno-Gregorian Church in Russia correspond with the interests of the State.

I consider it my duty to here add that His Majesty handed me your telegram of the 10th August, and he does not find the present an opportune time for your personal representations in this matter. Should it, however, subsequently be deemed advisable by your Holiness to come to St. Petersburgh to give explanations respecting your actions, in such case, it will be necessary to make representations on the subject through the Governor-General of the Caucasus.

In confiding myself to your prayers, I humbly beg of you to accept my deep esteem and devotion, with which I have the honour to be, the humble servant of your Holiness,

(Signed) V. PLEVE.

No. 129.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 642.) *Therapia, October* 7, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 603 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to report that since the creation of the new cattle tax therein mentioned, I have received numerous inquiries from His Majesty's Consular officers in Turkey as to whether it is leviable on British subjects, many of whom have addressed complaints against it to the Consulates, and I have hitherto replied in the sense that as the tax has not been accepted by this Embassy, British subjects are under no obligation to pay it, and should only do so under protest.

The foreign Representatives have, as your Lordship is aware, contended that no new tax can be imposed on foreign subjects in Turkey without the previous consent of their Governments, but as this theory has almost invariably been contested by the Sublime Porte, I have arranged with the other Embassies that a Dragomans' meeting shall be held on Friday next, at which it is proposed to draft an identic note to the Sublime Porte, pointing out that the formal consent of the foreign Representatives must be obtained before the cattle tax can be claimed from foreigners, and protesting against the attempts which have been made to levy it without previous consent.

It is probable that this action will result in a formal request being preferred by the Porte for the acceptance of the tax by the foreign Missions, and if this is done, I should be inclined, if your Lordship sees no objection, to return a favourable reply. The imposition of the sheep tax on foreign subjects has been accepted for many years past, and the new tax may reasonably be considered as merely an extension of it. Moreover, the number of British subjects who are large cattle owners is very limited, and a tax which amounts to less than 2*s.* a-year on each animal would not, in the majority of cases, be a heavy burden. My only hesitation is in regard to British Indian horse and camel owners in Asiatic Turkey, but even in their case I think it probable that exemption might involve them in local jealousies and difficulties which would be more serious than the tax.

I have reason to believe that most of the foreign Representatives here would be inclined to agree to the course I propose, provided that the Sublime Porte make the application for permission to impose the tax on foreign subjects in due form.

I should be glad to know as soon as possible whether the view I have taken of the question meets with your Lordship's approval.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 130.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 650.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 9, 1903.

WITH reference to the postscript to my despatch No. 629 of 2nd October, reporting a conflict between Turkish troops and Armenian revolutionaries, I have the honour to state that I have received a further telegram from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, dated the 4th October, to the effect that about fifty more Armenians had crossed the frontier and were engaged by the troops during the whole of the 3rd October. The result is not given, but Mr. Hampson adds that the Vali is confident that order will be speedily restored.

I have to-day received a telegram from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis reporting that 1 company of infantry and 1 battery of 5 mountain guns had started for Alashgird. As this place is the scene of the conflicts with the revolutionaries it would appear that their resistance may be more serious than was anticipated, and that they require to be dislodged from some fortified position.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 131.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 655.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 9, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 626 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout reporting the arrival of Khalil Pasha, the newly-appointed Vali.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 131.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 125.)

Sir, *Beirout, October* 2, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 117 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that Ibrahim Khalil Pasha, the newly-appointed Vali of the province, arrived here this morning from Constantinople. I understand from Nazim Pasha that he will return to Damascus very shortly, which for some reasons is much to be regretted; while, on other grounds, so far as the mutual relations of the two men are concerned, it is perhaps not undesirable.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 132.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 657.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 9, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on a journey on the Turko-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure 1 in No. 132.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30.)

Van, September 1, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on that portion of Persia and the Turco-Persian frontier, through which I travelled in November and December last.

I have already forwarded maps, road reports, and lists of tribes relating to this part of the country.

The first place in Persian territory which I entered was Kotur, the seat of a Governor or Hakim. The village consists of about a hundred houses, almost entirely Kurd, though it used to be Armenian. These latter emigrated to the Salmas Plain during the times of the massacres. I found here a company of Persian infantry. They were armed with Werndyl rifles—otherwise they did not resemble soldiers at all, comparing most unfavourably with the Turks in bearing and appearance. There were also some twenty gunners, and two bronze muzzle-loading guns of about 5-inch calibre in a ruined mud fort on the hill above the village.

I afterwards entered the Salmas Plain, but did not follow it down towards Urmi, turning off into the hills to the south of it, where I visited Jafer Agha of the Persian Shekaks in his village of Chari. He is the grandson of Ali Khan, who was a noted brigand on this frontier, and the head of all the Shekaks. Since then this tribe has broken up into numerous "kabylés," and their most powerful Chieftain now is Sheref Bey, a Turkish Mir Alai of Hamidie (see my No. 27 of the 16th November, 1902). Jafer Agha is nominally the head of the Persian Shekaks only now, but it seems that he practically rules only his own kabylé (the Abdisi), and his following is small. He is, however, strong enough to be a thorn in the side of the Turks, who regard him much as the Persians regard Sheref Bey, and who attribute the bad state of the frontier chiefly to him.

The Persian Government, on the other hand, appears to use its men as a sort of frontier guard, and to encourage them to make reprisals on the Turkish side of the frontier for the raids of Sheref Bey on the Persian side. With each Government winking at the deeds of its own brigand, and protesting that it is the fault of the other, it is no wonder that the state of security on this part of the frontier is not what it should be.

At Soymerawa I was the guest of another Shekak Chieftain, one Mustafa Agha, who, following the general tendency, has made himself independent of the family of Ali Khan. At all events, he is now at deadly enmity with Jafer Agha, the titular head of the clan, and the latter regards him as a rebel, as he does the Turkish kabylés.

The Persian Government seems to let its Kurds alone more than do the Turks. At the same time it is capable of dealing with them on occasions, and if they are not too strong. I found Soymerawa in ruins, having lately been the object of a punitive expedition; and I afterwards met the Kurdish Chief who had undertaken this job on behalf of the Government, and who had incidentally enriched himself thereby. It had apparently had the desired effect of bringing Mustafa Agha to the Government's point of view, and he was now dutifully paying the money demanded of him to a Persian official whom I found installed in his partially rebuilt house. To enable him to collect this tribute with the least inconvenience, he was evidently being allowed to rob all around him.

A poor Kurdish woman, driving a bullock laden with grain, was robbed the next day by Mustafa Agha's men almost under my eyes, as I was continuing my journey. I recovered the bullock for her, but it is not likely that she remained in possession long.

I had further opportunities of noting the attitude of the Persian Government towards its Kurds. As long as the latter pay certain sums of money, they are left absolutely alone, and the Aghas rule as they like.

In many places the Kurds are beyond the reach of the Government altogether, and do not even pay taxes. If some Agha who ought to pay does not do so, he is coerced by some other Agha, the Government giving its moral support to one of his enemies, who is probably only too glad of an excuse to attack him.

At the same time there is a general fear of Kurds among the Turkis of Azerbaijan, who are all Shujas, and who supply most of the Government officials. In the plains

of Urmi and Sulduz, all the walls and fortifications are for defence against Kurdish raids. There seems to be no doubt, however, that the Persian Government is gradually consolidating its power over the Kurds, and that it is spoiling them in so doing. In Persia, as in Turkey, the Kurd seems to degenerate in character in proportion as he comes under the influence of the Government, and is brought in contact with his rulers. I was much struck by the superior bearing and behaviour of the more independent and remote tribes, though this may be accounted for by the fact that those which I saw had no Christian population to live upon. A circumstance which also seems to have a bad influence upon Kurdish character.

If the Turkish Government in Kurdistan is bad, weak, and corrupt, the Government in Persian Kurdistan is so much worse, that I think one can say that there is no Government there. The Turks have officials who are trained and salaried as such, but the Persian Government and sub-Governors that I saw were, without one exception, local men, who had bought the posts. These posts are often practically forced upon rich men, who are not always anxious to be saddled with them, and the buyer has to try and recoup himself out of the people he governs. The whole aim and object of the Government and its officials seem to be to get money, and nothing else seems to matter much. There seems to be no organized force, either of military or of police. The only soldiers I saw while I was in the country were those at Kotur. I was told that some are kept at Serdesht during the summer, but that in winter the detachments are all withdrawn to Suj Bulak. At large places such as Urmi and Dilman, there are a few mounted men, who might be said to be gendarmerie. They are used as escorts, and at receptions, but will not escort anybody more than an hour or two outside their own towns, and they appear to be rather the personal retainers and servants of the Governor, which they probably are, than to belong to any Governmentally organized body.

In Urmi, it struck me that Russian influence was very powerful. The greater part of the Nestorians of the plain have joined the Orthodox Church in the hopes of "Russian protection," and there are continual rumours that the Armenians of Salmas Plain are about to follow their example. From Urmi down to Sulduz, and in the Sulduz Plain itself, the inhabitants are mostly Turki and Karapapak, with a certain number of Nestorians.

Naghirde, the principal village in the Sulduz Plain, is a place of some local importance, and contains a number of Jews, who are tanners and merchants. It is the residence of a Persian official, styled the Reshid-i-Sultana, who is a local Karapapak. But the Governor of the Sulduz district—also a local Karapapak—lives in the Fort outside the village of Chujana, and is called the Amr-i-Tuman.

On entering the hills, which bound the Sulduz Plain on the south, one gets into the region peopled by the Bilbass Kurds, who occupy the valley of the Lesser Zab, down to Serdesht, and extend over the frontier into the Pishder and Rania Plains. They are mostly nomads, passing the summer in tents on the mountains on the frontier, and have the usual characteristics of a frontier tribe, *i.e.*, they do not pay much attention either to the Turkish or Persian Governments, calling themselves subjects of one or the other as suits them best at the time, evading the consequences of misdeeds on one side of the frontier by crossing to the other, and generally living in a state of semi-independence. They have, consequently, a bad reputation for lawlessness. But this aloofness from Persian and Turkish influence has had the advantage of leaving them virtues of a primitive kind, not found, so far as I have observed, to so great an extent among the modern Kurds, who undoubtedly degenerate from contact with the two Governments, which nominally rule in Kurdistan.

I found the Bilbass not at all fanatical, though very devout, very hospitable, delighted to see a European, and to talk with him. Some of the Aghas surprised me by their general knowledge of foreign countries and questions, and they were all eager for news and information. I was always treated by them with the greatest friendliness and courtesy, and the various Aghas with whom I stayed took pains to insure my safe passage through their country. As I had seen no Persian soldiers or police to speak of south of Kotur, I could get no Government escort among the Bilbass, and I had to rely on being forwarded from Agha to Agha—much better protection under the circumstances. The only man who attempted to treat me rudely was the solitary Persian official whom I found in the Bilbass country. Unfortunately they are always fighting among themselves, and this sometimes makes it difficult to get the necessary escort.

After leaving Sulduz, the first important village I reached was Pasva, the residence of Muhammad Agha, Chief of the Mamash section of the Bilbass. He is an

intelligent man, and occupies an important position in the country, being on good terms with the Persian Government, though he can hardly be said to be subject to it. I found that he is intrusted from time to time by the Government with the carrying out of punitive expeditions against recalcitrant tribes, though it would be difficult to say whether, on these occasions, he was doing his duty as a Government official, or carrying out private reprisals under the ægis of a Government order. I suppose it suits him to do the Government's work, if they help him to do his own.

From him I was forwarded to Muhammad Emin Agha, the Chief of the Piran section, who lives at Shinawa, at the head of the Lahjan Plain. He was also a well-informed and intelligent man, and was the only Bilbass Agha I met who could talk Turkish. He used to live in the Rania Plain, but some time back found it convenient to change his nationality, which was easily done, as the Piran, like the Mamash and Mangor, have villages on both sides of the frontier. He left his cousin's son, whom I afterwards met, in possession of the Piran villages in Rania.

It had been my intention to follow the course of the Lesser Zab down the Lahjan Plain, but as there was fighting here between the Mamash and Mangor, and Muhammad Emin Agha could not give me an escort, nor guarantee my safety in that direction, I decided to cross the frontier, and try to get to Serdesht from the Turkish side. Previous experience had shown me that there was no hope of getting Government escort among the Kurds in Persia, and had led me to believe that I could always do so in Turkey. I therefore went from Shinawa to Rowanduz by the Rayat Pass. Though the pass itself is easy, the road to Rowanduz is very bad, but it is the principal caravan route here between Turkey and Persia, and bears a large proportion of the trade in local produce between Mosul and its surrounding districts, and Urmi and Tabreez. This saves a considerable distance in going round from Mosul by Suleimania, though I was told that the latter was an easier road. At this time of year, the only traffic seemed to be in Mazi (oak-galls), of which I met several caravans, and was much struck by the fine mules which composed them. The tract of country along this frontier—inclosed between lines from Mosul to Baghdad on the west, and from Kermanshah towards Lake Urmi on the east, produces a large number of mules of size and quality, and would probably be a good field for remount purchasing operations.

The first village in Turkish territory after crossing the pass is that of Sheikh Kemal. It is a Mamash village, but a holy Arab Sheikh having settled there, the village seems to have become his property as a matter of course, and he not only now owns it, but wields great influence among the surrounding Kurds. He has built a mosque here, and improvised baths about the spring which rises above the village for the necessary devotional ablutions of the numerous pilgrims who come here. I found the Sheikh Sayyid Kemal-ud-Din to be a very old man, unable to speak anything but Arabic and a little Persian; but in spite of his sanctity, very hospitable and tolerant and with a good reputation for his treatment of travellers and strangers. I gathered that it was the present Sheikh's father who settled here; but it would seem that the Ziaret below the village, in the pass, has been regarded as a holy place, and was the resort of pilgrims for a very long time.

It was said that a single man bearing a letter from the Sheikh was better protection than any number of armed men provided by any one else. To show the kind of influence he enjoys, and how he employs it, I may mention the experience of an English clergyman travelling by this route from Mosul to Urmi about two years ago. He had passed the night at Sheikh Kemal, and the next day was held-up in the pass by Kurdish horsemen and robbed of his money and other valuables, while his servant and muleteer were pretty well stripped. On arriving at Pasva he went to see Muhammad Agha and produced the safe-conduct given him by the Sheikh. Though the clergyman could not understand what was said, he told me that the production of the Sheikh's letter seemed to produce a great effect. He was begged to go on to Suj Bulak and told that everything would be restored to him there. On arrival at Suj Bulak he found all that had been taken waiting for him, though the actual thieves never appeared, and there was no means of identifying them.

The universal language on this frontier is Kermanji, while the Aghas and better educated among the people also speak Persian. Turkish is practically unknown, and even so far as Rowanduz and Rania, scarcely any one can speak it except the various Government employés.

All round Rowanduz the country is extremely difficult, and there would seem to be very little to choose between the numerous passes which converge on that place.

I went south over the Bejan Pass and by the Alma Dere to Rania. From thence to Kala Diza, the Merkez of the new Caza of Hamidie. I had been told that, as there

were Turkish soldiers there, I could get an escort to conduct me to the frontier. But I found that the portion of the frontier inhabited by the Bilbass was as much *terra incognita* to the Turks as to the Persians. None of the officials could give me any information as to the routes across it or as to the pass which I was looking for, and I was again constrained to depend on the goodwill of local Aghas.

I reached Serdesht, crossing a pass which was evidently too high and too far to the south to be the gap in the frontier range that I was looking for. At Serdesht I found a Persian Hakim, which shows that the Central Government has made some progress in extending its authority among the Kurdish tribes. For this man was an ordinary Persian official and a Shiya. When Mr. W. B. Harris visited this country about seven years ago he found that one of the local Aghas was the Governor at Serdesht, and he says that, at that time, it was not possible to impose a Persian Governor on the Kurds. Now I found that there was not only a Persian Governor, but that he was actively employed in collecting taxes for the Government.

At Serdesht I got sufficient information to enable me to identify the gap in the frontier range, which was my quest, as that known as the Wazna Yolu, or road over the Wazna Plateau to the north. This road is in Bilbass country, and they could not send me there from Serdesht, as it was necessary to get a Bilbass escort. So I had to make a détour to Nistan, the seat of Khidr Agha, Chief of the Geowrik section of the Bilbass, on the other side of the Zab. The Persian Hakim of Serdesht was here, waiting in the Agha's house until a sufficient sum in taxes should be collected by the tribe to buy his departure. Though he was evidently an unwelcome guest, the Agha seemed to realize that the quickest way to get rid of him was to comply with his demands. When I talk of certain portions of Persian Kurdistan as having been brought under by the Persian Government, I do not mean that the latter has established any real government, law, or order there. It seems simply to confine its attention to collecting money, otherwise the Aghas rule absolutely as of old.

Around Serdesht, the tribes which have been brought under are not Bilbass; and the only section of the Bilbass which the Government seems to have been able to reach hitherto is this Geowrik section, which lives almost entirely on the left bank of the Zab, and which is, to a large extent, sedentary. The sections of the Bilbass on the right bank of the Zab do not yet seem to have been reached by the Government, even to the extent of paying it any money.

From Nistan I went north, recrossed the Zab, and reached Alwatan, at the head of the Wazna Yolu. This is the residence of Osman Agha, known generally as the Agha-i-Baizi, Head of the Mangor section of the Bilbass. He also claims to be the titular Head of all the Bilbass; but as the various sections are always at war with each other, and each pays direct obedience to its own Chief, there would appear to be no value in this claim. However, the fact that the Agha-i-Baizi is nominally Head of all the Bilbass was admitted to me by other Aghas. It would seem that the other sections of the Bilbass have gradually broken away from under the Reiss of the Mangor, and become independent of him—a hypothesis borne out by the fact that Mr. W. B. Harris never mentions the word "Bilbass," and seems to allude to them all as "Mangor"—except the Geowrik, which he gives as a separate tribe. However, I was assured that the Geowrik were also Bilbass; and the fact that the non-Bilbass tribes round Serdesht could not give me an escort to Alwatan, but that Khidr Agha, at Nistan, could do so, would seem to show that the Geowrik are a section of the Bilbass. However, they differ from the other Bilbass tribes in being, as far as I could ascertain, the only one of them which has been brought sufficiently under the Persian Government to pay taxes to it, and in being sedentary and cultivators, rather than nomad and pastoral, doubtless due to their more accessible position on the left bank of the Zab, and to the richer country which they inhabit.

From Alwatan I returned to Rania by the Wazna road, which leads down into the Pishder Plain. Though this pass is distinctly lower than either of the other two which I crossed (the Rayat Pass and the one direct to Serdesht), and the road is the easiest one of the three on the whole, yet it is not of much practical use. As far as I could judge, the engineering difficulties, and consequent cost of a railway would preclude one being made here for purely military purposes; and it would take many years of tranquillity, prosperity, and energetic and improved methods of cultivation, in the tracts on either side of the frontier range—in short, of a very different condition of affairs to that which now prevails, before the commercial value of such a railway would make the cost of construction worth while. Otherwise, this is the natural route for the produce of which Keni Sandjak is the centre, and for that of the plains round Erbil and Rania, into Persia. But it is practically unused by caravans, which have to

make the round either by Suleimania, or by Rowanduz and the Rayat Pass, because of the lawlessness of the Bilbass.

The tribes on this frontier do not appear to be well armed to one who is accustomed to see the Turkish Hamidie Kurds swaggering about with their Government Martinis. Still, they have advanced beyond the long flint-lock jezail, and at several places about this frontier, notably Suleimania, they make breech-loading rifles for themselves.

In these centres there is a thriving gun-smith's business, the weapons they usually make being a Martini stock and breech action (with all the marks and lettering faithfully copied) added to a Berdan barrel. These rifles cost 4 or 5 liras.

The Kurds, with whom I conversed on both sides of the frontier, seemed to prefer the Persian Government to the Turkish—naturally, as they are left more alone. At the same time they do not like the Persians, and regard the Sultan with greater respect than they do the Shah, which is accounted for by the fact that they are Sunnis.

In some places, I was told—quietly and without the Agha's knowledge—that any decent Government would be welcomed; that they would like to be under a European Power; that the Aghas oppressed their people very much; and that no redress could be obtained by injured parties under the weak and venal officials provided by the two Governments between which they find themselves.

I append lists of tribes inhabiting that portion of the frontier through which I passed. As usual, the numbers here given are mere hearsay or guesswork. It is impossible to verify information, or to reconcile conflicting estimates, without staying some time among the people.

One informant absolutely contradicts another, and, owing to the state of tribal politics, there is a continual change going on. The process of disintegration—the multiplication of little Aghas, who make themselves independent of their nominal Chiefs, perhaps while possessing only one village, is even more pronounced among the Bilbass than among the tribes round Van. Several names were given to me as those of separate and independent "Ashirets," which appear to exist as such only in the imagination of their own Agha.

The state of flux consequent on inter-tribal feuds, the absorption of smaller tribes and their villages by a tribe which is temporarily strong, and its probable absorption or diminution in its turn, render such statistics as are obtainable of little permanent use.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 132.

Lists of Tribes.

(A.)—The Shekaks.

THE large Shekak Ashiret occupies both sides of the Turko-Persian frontier from the source of the Great Zab, down Allaq to Diza and the Jelu mountains on one side, and from between Kotur and Salmas to Baradost on the other.

Some twenty years ago this tribe was united under the notorious Ali Khan, but it has now split up into a number of Kulyles, more or less independent of each other, and these subdivisions now unite roughly into two hostile groups—the Turkish Shekaks and the Persian Shekaks.

	Kulyles.	Agha's Name and Residence.	Remarks.
Turkey ..	Merziki	Sherif Bey. Lives at Kuruchion, on the Bashkala-Salmas Road	Supply the 20th Regiment of Hamidie.
	Shekefti.		
	Gavan.		
	Mohmedi.		
	Henarai	Haji Mousa Agha. He does not recognize Sherif Bey	The most southerly of the Shekaks, about Diza.
Persia ..	Abdüi	Mehmed Pasha, son of Ali Khan, is still alive, but has been deposed by his son, Jafer Agha, who now occupies a position among the Persian Shekaks similar to that of Sherif Bey among the Turkish ones. His village, Ghari.	
	Mirân.		
	Kuriki.		

(B.)—The Bilbass.

Sections.	Location.	Chief's Name and Residence.	Estimated Number of Houses.	Subordinate, and more or less independent, Aghas whom I came across, with Name of Village of Residence.
Mangor (Turkey and Persia)	Lahjan Plain. Valley of Lesser Zab. About Wazna Rania Plain, east of the Keui-Sanjak Road Pishder Plain, on right bank of the Wazna River. *Note.*—The term "Pishder" Kurds seems to be applied only to the Mangor who live in Pishder Plain.	Agha-i-Baizi (Osman Agha), lives at Alwatan, and is theoretically head of all the Bilbass	3,000	Baiz Agha, Terkesh. Bapir Agha, Gellatin. Abramün Agha, Sherwet (head of the Pishder Kurds). Sofi Khidr Agha, Duchonun.
Mamash (Turkey and Persia)	Between Salduz and Lahjan, and between Suj Bulak and the Zab Pishder Plain, on left bank of the Wazna River.	Muhammad Agha, lives at Pasva	3,000	
Piran (Turkey and Persia)	Lahjan Plain, and to the west of it Rania Plain, west of Keui-Sanjak Road.	Muhammad Emin Agha, lives at Shinawa	2,000	Mehmed Agha, Serubinawa (head of the Piran of Rania Plain, who muster 500 or 600 fighting men).
Geowrik (Persia)	Chiefly on left bank of Lesser Zab, extending south from the Mamash	Khidr Agha, lives at Nistan	6,000	Reshid Agha, Robat. Baiz Agha, Pairusta.

The following were also given me as separate sections, but I could not accurately locate them:—

Ramek (Persia) ..	I believe these are a part of the Geowrik, or closely connected with them	Khidr Agha ..	400
Ramek (Persia) ..		Ahmed Agha ..	500
Khidr Mamasina	.. ..	Rasul Agha ..	300
Susi (Turkey) ..	Apparently intermingled with the Piran and Mangor of the Rania Plain	Ali Agha	400
Jai-i-Kakhli ..	Apparently a sub-section of the Mangor, as the Agha-i-Baizi is said to be of the Jai-i-Kakhli	.. ..	700

(C.)—Kurdish Tribes round Serdesht.

Name.	Position in regard to Serdesht.	Remarks.
Alan	South-west	
Bairaji	North-west	Chief, Muhammad Agha, who lives at Biazila; 500 rifles.
Basik	East	
Malkarri	North and west	Chief, Hamze Agha, who lives at Malla Sheikh.

The above are all small tribes on the right bank of the Zab, which have been brought under by the Persian Government, and are not important.

No. 133.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 14.)

(No. 658. Confidential.)

Constantinople, October 9, 1903.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, two despatches from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, pointing out the difficulties experienced by Muzaffer Pasha in the administration of the Lebanon, especially in connection with the arrest of Christian criminals, and commenting on the attitude of the French Consul-General.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 133.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 127.)

Beirout, October 1, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that in consequence of repeated urgent requests from Nazim Pasha, who himself is being subjected to considerable pressure on this point by the more extreme section of the Moslem population of the city, Muzaffer Pasha is making vigorous efforts to discover and arrest those Christians who, whether in the somewhat remote part or quite recently, have either actually murdered or committed murderous assaults on Moslems and then escaped to the Lebanon. So far a considerable number of arrests have been made but in no case has any notorious malefactor been arrested of whom there are a few whose names are well-known.

I am inclined to suspect from what I hear that no serious effort is being made to find and seize these men, who, I believe I stated in a previous despatch, are looked upon as national heroes and their escape connived at by the whole of the country side. The zeal shown in this matter by Muzaffer Pasha, which is undoubted, has only tended to increase his unpopularity in the Lebanon where the determined efforts in the same direction made by Amir Moustapha Arslan and his partisans aided by the Pasha's own acts of vacillation and impudence, are already bearing fruit. Indeed it is doubtful whether any Governor of the Lebanon has been so universally disliked and mistrusted, certainly in so short a time, as Muzaffer Pasha is at this moment.

I might mention that there is a certain amount of excitement and unrest among the Druses generally, chiefly owing to the machinations of Amir Moustapha and partly, to a certain extent, owing to a sort of vague feeling of sympathy for the Moslems in their constant quarrels with the Christians.

In support of this statement I may mention briefly two incidents which have occurred lately in the mountain, and which though of no importance in themselves, show which way the wind blows.

The Greek Orthodox Bishop of the Lebanon being expected in the village of Blatir, all the Christians and even many of the Druses went out to meet him. On their return with the Bishop a quarrel arose between the Maronites and Druses about some trifle in the course of which one of the latter knocked down and bent the stick of the cross which one of the former was carrying.

The ultimate though not the immediate outcome was a fight between the two sectaries, resulting in the wounding of three Druses and four Christians, while in the case of one of the latter the wound proved fatal. The Pasha took the matter up at once and arrested and imprisoned the eight Druses and three Christians (one of the latter escaped) who took part in the fight.

Not long afterwards some Christians were bringing down a large beam to Blatir, and, as is their custom on such occasions, chanted one of their national songs as they went. The Druses in a neighbouring village hearing what they took for shouts and cries of defiance, armed themselves and rushed down ready for the fray. On coming up with the Christians they recognized their mistake, but their attitude was most insolent and provocative, and might have led to serious consequences had the Christians been as ready to fight as themselves. The Pasha hearing of this incident had fourteen of these Druses thrown into prison.

The severity of the Governor's conduct both on this and the previous occasion, has not tended to increase his popularity with the Druses, as may well be imagined.

I trust that this effervescence may blow over, but from what I hear in one or two other quarters, I am not altogether sanguine that this will be the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 133.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 129. Confidential.)

Beirout, October 2, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I had an interesting confidential conversation with Muzaffer Pasha last night, his Excellency having come down to Beirout in order to greet Ibrahim Khalil Pasha, the new Vali, who arrived this morning.

The Pasha tells me that do what he will to discover and arrest the two notorious Christian assassins of whom I made mention in a previous despatch, viz.: Elias Flabbi and Ghandour Zreick, and three others whose names are less known; his efforts have not hitherto been crowned with success. The reason of this is that these men are regarded as champions of the Christian cause, and therefore every man, woman, and child in the Lebanon is deeply interested in concealing and protecting them. Flabbi, especially, is the object of their regard, and there is not a monastery in the mountain where he is not a welcome guest to be taken in and protected against the pursuit of the authorities at all hazards. And yet it is a well-established fact that this man has the blood of many Moslems on his head, the murders committed by him being put by some as high as twenty or thirty. This very possibly is an exaggerated estimate, but it is admitted on all hands that he considers himself and is universally considered as the divinely-appointed instrument for the wreaking of Christian vengeance for Moslem deeds of violence. This being so your Excellency will understand what an exceedingly difficult task Muzaffer Pasha has in trying to capture such men.

The Pasha also complains of the intrigues of Amir Mustapha Arslan, who is leaving no stone unturned to render the administration of the Lebanon by him (Muzaffer Pasha) an impossibility. As I stated in a previous despatch it was the Amir Mustapha who was at the bottom of the hostile movement which was put on foot in the mountain some two months ago, and which took the form of sending Petitions to the Sultan praying for the removal of the Pasha for many reasons, some of which unfortunately were not without foundation. I will not say, of course, that the feelings of distrust, suspicion, and I may even add, hostility which the Pasha's administration has aroused throughout the Lebanon, would never have existed if the Amir Mustapha had been his friend instead of his enemy, but I may safely assert that he has shown extraordinary activity in stirring up the people against the Pasha, and where he has only found smouldering embers he has never rested until he has fanned them into fiercely burning live coals. I might cite several instances which the Pasha quoted to me as indicative of the untiringly vindictive spirit of the man and his fixed determination to "make things so hot," if I may be pardoned a colloquialism, for the Pasha that either he will be forced to resign (?) or to dismiss Nessib Bey Jumblat from office, and reinstate the Amir in the Kaimakamlik of the Sheef.

So serious does the Pasha consider the existing state of things that he has begged the Sultan to remove the Amir elsewhere, if not actually to exile him to some distant part of the Empire. Unfortunately, it is a well-known fact, as the Pasha confessed to me, that the Amir is supported and protected by Ahmed Izzet Pasha and, therefore, not easily reached by any one except the Sultan himself.

The Pasha points out that the Amir's present policy is to stir up a feeling of enmity between the Druses and Christians in which he appears to have been partially successful, as stated by me in my despatch No. 127 of yesterday's date. He does not appear to realise what a dangerous game this is, how easily he may burn his own fingers, and how compromising such conduct is for his newly-found friend and protector, M. de Scrcey, the French Consul-General. This brings me to the Pasha's chief grievance of which he wished to unburden himself to me and that is the so-far inexplicable attitude adopted for some time past by this functionary, who has taken up the cause of the Amir with the utmost enthusiasm, has him, as well as his son, constantly in his house in the Lebanon,

and has actually tried to reconcile him with the Pasha himself. Considering all that has taken place within the past year and the well-known fact that French Consuls do not, admittedly and traditionally, interfere with Druse affairs in the Lebanon, the conduct of M. de Sercey in this respect is indeed inexplicable. His action in the matter of advising the Christian refugees to stay in the mountain and not to return to Beirout, and so to keep up the existing feelings of unrest, distrust, fear, and excitement which, every one will admit, should be allayed as soon as possible, is equally unintelligible. In short, what his policy is at present, unless it be to keep the whole country in a state of ferment, it is difficult to conceive.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 134.

Sir C. Greene to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 14.)

(No. 49. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Berne, October* 12, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 63, Commercial, Confidential, of the 27th July last, on the subject of the proposed Bagdad Railway Company, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, a copy of a further letter which I have received from M. Falck, His Majesty's Consul at Lucerne, reporting that a telegraphic announcement had been published from Brussels, dated the 10th instant, to the effect that a meeting of the French and German promoters of the scheme had been held, at which a complete understanding had been arrived at, and that the official participation of France in the concern was now assured.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CONYNGHAM GREENE.

Inclosure in No. 134.

Consul Falck to Sir C. Greene.

Excellence, *Lucerne, le* 11 *Octobre*, 1903.

RIEN de nouveau ne s'est présenté depuis concernant l'affaire "Bagdad-Bahn," sauf la notice télégraphique d'hier de Bruxelles, disant:

"Une réunion des intéressés Allemands et Français a eu lieu sous la présidence de M. Auboyneau, Directeur de la Banque Ottomane. L'accord est complet; la participation officielle de la France est assurée."

Je reste, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS FALCK.

No. 135.

Intelligence Division to Foreign Office.—(*Received October* 15.)

THE Director-General of Mobilization and Military Intelligence presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, in reply to his letter dated the 30th ultimo, and received in the Intelligence Department on the 6th instant, begs to submit the following observations relative to the proposed branch of the Hejaz Railway from Ma'an to Akaba, and possibly from Akaba to El Arish:—

(*a.*) Very little is known regarding the Turkish-Egyptian boundary, but it is understood that Akaba is regarded as belonging to Turkey, and is not now claimed by the Egyptian Government. Assuming this to be the case, Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell's suggestion to include it in Egyptian territory by the arbitrary extension of the Egyptian boundary would not seem to be a practical solution of the question.

(*b.*) A branch line to the port of Akaba may be expected to increase the general value of the Hejaz Railway, and therefore it is only natural that the connection should be contemplated.

(*c.*) With regard to the strategical conditions involved, assuming that we possess sea command, Sir William Nicholson is unable to see that the construction

of the railway from Ma'an to Akaba would confer on Turkey, or an ally of Turkey, any advantages of importance. He is inclined to concur in the opinion expressed in Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 485 of the 18th August last, that the Sultan's principal object in making the line would be to afford his Moslem subjects greater facilities for their pilgrimage to the Holy Cities without passing through the Suez Canal.

(*d.*) On the other hand, as a line from Akaba to El Arish would be of no commercial value, the only apparent object in making it would be to enable Turkey to concentrate troops by land within striking distance of the Suez Canal and Lower Egypt; and as El Arish is stated to be within Egyptian territory, there seems no reason why the British Government should acquiesce in such a project.

Mr. Findlay's despatch No. 101 of the 20th ultimo is returned herewith.

Mobilization and Intelligence Department,
Winchester House, St. James's Square, S.W.,
October 14, 1903.

No. 136.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 21.)

(No. 668.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 15, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beirout transmitting copy of a telegram sent to the ex-Vali Reshid Bey on the eve of his departure from Beirout by the First Secretary to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 136.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 123.)
Sir, *Beirout, September* 30, 1903.

WITH reference to one paragraph in my despatch No. 117 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to forward herewith inclosed copy of a telegram, with its accompanying translation, which was received by the ex-Vali Reshid Bey from Tahsin Pasha, the First Secretary to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, on the eve of his (Reshid Bey's) departure from Beirout.

Your Excellency will, I am convinced, agree with me that it is perfectly outrageous that such a message should have been sent to such a man under the then existing circumstances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 136.

Tahsin Pasha to Reshid Bey.

(Translation.)
(Telegraphic.) [*Undated.*]

YOUR Excellency's fidelity being well established in the eyes of His Most Sacred Majesty the Caliph, you should not allow yourself to be in the least affected by the fact of your dismissal. It is His Majesty's Imperial will (Iradeh Seniyeh) that you should return at once to Constinople in order to be the recipient of the Royal favours.

No. 137.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 21.*)

(No. 670.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 15, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 650 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum reporting fighting with bands of Armenian revolutionaries near the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 137.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 35.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 3, 1903.*

AS I had the honour to inform your Excellency by telegram yesterday, a somewhat serious conflict between Armenian revolutionaries and Turkish troops occurred near the Russian frontier on the 1st instant. The former, to the number of about eighty, sixty of whom were mounted, had crossed the frontier, to the south of the Kars road, into Passin on Wednesday night, which they spent at the village of Taihoja, about three hours from the frontier.

Early on Thursday morning they proceeded, about one and a-half hours, to Yuzveren, where they found a small detachment of troops, who, with the patrols, &c., who came to their assistance, numbered somewhat under 100 men. The Armenians divided into three parties and took up strong positions, and a fight ensued which lasted the whole day. Eventually the Armenians were dispersed, leaving a good many killed and wounded, the number not yet known. The troops lost a captain, a sergeant, and five or six soldiers killed; and two officers and several privates wounded.

News of the affair only reached Erzeroum on Thursday evening, the Armenians having cut the telegraph wires, so that Hassan Kalé was the nearest available station.

The Vali at once sent two companies of infantry and a small detachment of cavalry to restore order, under Ahmed Abouk Pasha, a capable and enlightened officer; and it is thought that the Armenians who escaped have retired across the frontier, and that all fighting is at an end. The Vali informs me that he is confident that the incident is over.

As usual, the first rumours of the affair reached Erzeroum in a very exaggerated form, and there was considerable excitement and alarm. The Armenians were in a panic, fearing that they would be suspected of sympathizing with the revolutionaries, and that the Mussulmans would seize the pretext to attack them; but the Vali at once took all necessary measures to prevent disorders and to assure the Armenians that he was convinced of their loyalty; and by yesterday afternoon confidence was completely restored.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 137.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 6, 1903.*

IN continuation of my preceding despatch of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to report that on Friday last, the 2nd instant, a second band of about fifty Armenian revolutionaries crossed into Passin from Russia. On the next day they met a detachment of troops at the village of Komassor, about an hour east of Yuzveren, where the fight with the other band occurred; and fighting continued most of that day. Eventually this band also was dispersed, leaving a number of prisoners and wounded. The troops lost another captain; other losses not yet known.

Full details are wanting, the telegraph wires having again been cut; but the Vali assured me last night that he is confident of being able to deal easily with all such bands, and that he has no fear of any general disorder. He has publicly declared that he considers the incursion of these bands as acts of simple brigandage, to be dealt with by the military and police; and has strictly forbidden the intervention of any other inhabitants, whether Mussulmans or Christians. This town is perfectly quiet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

P.S.—A traveller reports that he saw the bodies of at least forty Armenians who had been killed in the fighting.

C. S. H.

No. 138.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 21.*)

(No. 676.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 16, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 485 of the 18th August, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Damascus, reporting on the progress made with the construction of the Hedjaz Railway.

A copy of the inclosed despatch has also been sent to His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Cairo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 138.

Acting Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 74.)
Sir, *Damascus, October 7, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 68 of the 5th ultimo, I have the honour to report as follows:—

There is now on the Hedjaz line a train from Damascus Amman (223 kilom.) and back three times a-week. This train is primarily for the conveyance of material for the construction of the line, but tickets are also issued to passengers.

On the 5th instant, the Chief Engineer in charge of the construction, Herr Meissner, accompanied by three other engineers, left Damascus for Ma'an (about 460 kilom.) to set out the line beyond Ma'an, and persons likely to be well informed assert that he will go to Akaba, which would lend probability to the theory that the Ottoman Government intends to construct a branch from Ma'an to Akaba.

Herr Meissner has also been given charge of the construction of the east of the Jordan section of the Haifa line with an additional monthly pay of 1,000 fr. The French Company has refused to carry any longer material from Beirut for the Hedjaz Railway at a reduced rate, whereas it has hitherto allowed a 55 per cent. reduction, and for this reason the Ottoman Government intends to push on the construction of the Haifa Railway as fast as possible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 139.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October 21.*)

(No. 677.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 16, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on the state of the district during the past quarter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 139.

Quarterly Report.

THE summer months have passed with great tranquillity throughout the Vilayet of Erzeroum. Crimes of all sorts have been rare; and, except during a few weeks, when the fear of serious events in Sassoun caused considerable excitement and anxiety, the population has been remarkably calm. In view of the serious difficulties of the Ottoman Empire in European Turkey, and of the insurrection in Macedonia, this tranquillity is very striking. It is true that, at one moment, reports from Erzingian and the surrounding district were alarming; but inquiry showed that the stories circulated in regard to the situation there were unfounded or very much exaggerated; and it appears that they were the result partly of the arrest of a number of foolish young Armenians who were in correspondence with the revolutionaries in Russia, and partly of intrigues to obtain the removal of the Mutessarif, who is unpopular with Mussulmans and Christians alike, owing to want of tact and roughness of manner, as far as I can understand, rather than to any actual mal-administration.

Nazim Bey, the Vali of Erzeroum, has undoubtedly gained much in authority and reputation during the past months. It is realized that, under a somewhat hesitating and very quiet manner, he conceals a strong will and firm determination to maintain order; and I think that there can be no doubt of his desire to administer the province in a just and enlightened manner. He is without strong prejudices, and always willing to hear both sides of a question; and, being a wealthy man, young, and with considerable influence at Constantinople, he is able to take his own line without fear. Moreover, he has, by tact and prudence, placed himself on a friendly footing with the Mushir, a most important condition if any Vali here hopes to carry out his views of administration. The measures which he has adopted, with the concurrence of the Mushir, in regard to patrolling the Passin and Khais districts, and so controlling the Kurds, have met with complete success; and he has, to a considerable extent, limited the carrying of arms.

As already stated, affairs in Sassoun were, for a time, very threatening; and the expectation of any serious trouble there gives rise to fears of more extended disorders. Both Mussulmand and Christians remember that the massacres of 1895 had their immediate origin in the events in Sassoun in 1894; and such memories are in themselves a source of danger in a country where panics are frequent and where a combination of nervousness and fanaticism forms the ruling spirit. Fortunately, the design of the authorities to use the presence of a considerable number of revolutionaries who had been allowed to assemble in the mountains of Sassoun as a pretext for military operations, with the assistance of the nomad Kurds, against the Armenians—with the probable object of removing them from their mountain strongholds once for all—was put a stop to by the representations of the Embassies. Orders have recently again been given to use military force against the revolutionaries in Sassoun, but not until the nomad tribes have left the mountains; and, under these circumstances, even if these orders are carried out, it may be hoped that the operations will not entail serious excesses. The season for operations in the mountains is nearly over now, and winter, the great pacificator in these regions, is at hand.

Various bands of Armenians have crossed the frontier from Russia, some of which have been successful in reaching Sassoun, while others have been met and turned back. They show very little disposition to face opposition; and I fancy that many of their movements have been undertaken as an "acquit de conscience," the result of some sort of agreement between the Armenian Committees and those in Macedonia. The Russian authorities would appear to show but little energy in preventing them from entering Turkey.

Considerable discontent is evident at the heavy increase of taxation, the tax of 10 piastres per head on horses and cattle falling very hard on the peasants. The harvest is very abundant; but the high cost of transport by road to the sea coast prevents any profitable export of grain.

(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

Erzeroum, September 30, 1903.

No. 140.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 681.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 16, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 650 of the 9th instant respecting encounters between Turkish troops and Armenian revolutionaries, I have the honour to transmit herewith paraphrase of a telegram which I have just received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting measures taken to meet any revolutionary disturbances, including the calling out and arming of the Hamidieh regiments.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 140.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bitlis, October* 16, 1903.

VALI has started again for Mousb three days after his return. He says that some fifty revolutionaries having escaped from the frontier fight, his presence is necessary in case of disturbances arising. It is reported that, owing to the calling out and arming of the Hamidieh and the concentration of soldiers from outlying posts, there is much uneasiness in the north of the vilayet.

No. 141.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 684.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 16, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith paraphrase of a telegram, dated to-day, which I have received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, respecting acts of robbery and violence in that town.

I propose to call the attention of the Sublime Porte to the state of lawlessness reported by Major Newmarch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 141.

Consul-General Newmarch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bagdad, October* 16, 1903.

THERE is an evident increase of dacoits and housebreaking in this district. Yesterday evening, within a mile of Bagdad, I saw a party of men on horseback shoot the owner of some camels and drive off his beasts. The victim has since died. Certain British subjects have recently been robbed in a similar manner, and I have addressed a serious remonstrance to the Vali on the subject.

No. 142.

*Foreign Office to India Office.**

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 22, 1903.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to transmit to you herewith copies of despatches from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,† relative to a new tax on cattle which has been imposed in the Turkish Empire, and the question of whether it should be accepted as leviable on British subjects.

* Also to Board of Trade. † Nos. 118 and 129.

Sir N. O'Conor reports that the Embassies in Constantinople propose to address an identic note to the Porte, pointing out that the formal consent of the foreign Representatives must be obtained before the tax can be claimed from foreigners, and protesting against the attempts which have been made to levy it without such previous consent. In the probable result of a formal request being preferred by the Porte for the acceptance of the tax by the foreign Missions, his Excellency suggests that a favourable answer should be returned.

I am to request that Lord Lansdowne may be favoured with an early expression of the views of the Secretary of State for India on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 143.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 296.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 26, 1903.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 684 of the 16th instant, inclosing a telegram from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad respecting acts of robbery and violence in that town.

Your Excellency's proposal to call the attention of the Sublime Porte to the state of lawlessness reported by Major Newmarch has my approval.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 144.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received October* 28.)

(No. 686.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 21, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, reporting on the very unsatisfactory state of that district.

Some months ago I drew the Grand Vizier's attention to the condition of affairs in the Vilayet of Trebizond, and I have learnt from indirect sources that his Highness has taken the matter in hand with a view to an improvement in the Administration.

With regard to Mr. Consul Longworth's observations on the composition of the Commercial Court, I am advised that, though unusual, it is not illegal that the Turkish members should be exclusively Moslem.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 144.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)
Sir, *Trebizond, October* 1, 1903.

PERMIT me to describe as follows the condition of affairs in this vilayet during the quarter just ended.

The materials for the report lying before me consist largely of police news. Acts of burglary, robbery, and murder, especially in the Trebizond district of the province, appear to have been of almost daily occurrence.

The blame must necessarily rest with the Vali, who is evidently less feared than liked by the unruly and by his own worthless subordinates. It may well be doubted, all the same, whether a better man can be found for the post, for, though weak, he is at least intelligent, conscientious, and kind-hearted.

At and near Trebizond numerous were the cases of house-breaking. As none of the guilty were brought to justice, the police were much suspected of being in connivance with the burglars. In the late Cadri Bey's time people slept with doors

open; but now watch-dogs are in demand, for locks and bars failed in some instances to keep out thieves.

Large armed bands took to smuggling, and, when a chance presented itself, to highway robbery, with the utmost freedom and impunity. Strings of 50 to 150 horses laden with contraband tobacco left Platana for the inland districts at close intervals. Not one was stopped by the specially organized preventive service, composed of eighty guards and forty gendarmes. The result has been a rapid decrease from 10,000*l.* to 7,000*l.* in the monthly receipts of the Régie Agency. The monopoly, indeed, is likely in these parts to become valueless if a strong Governor be not appointed, or if the right to shoot smugglers be not legally sanctioned so as to exclude trial for murder.

Assaults with violence are beyond count, while the known cases of assassination reached the figure of fourteen. All these who thus lost their lives were Mahommedans, and four of them were women. Among the Christians the victims of felonious attacks were few. At Sifta, near Yomoura, four armed Turks looted the dwelling of a Greek, and outraged the mistress of the house. At Gomera, also near Yomoura, two Greeks, without the slightest provocation, were shot at and badly wounded by a Turk, now in custody.

An armed Moslem rabble congregated for two or three nights during the middle of August in one of the Christian quarters of the town. The rioters, some eighty in number, disturbed the peace by throwing stones and by threatening to bestow on the Greeks the treatment experienced by the Armenians. As the Vali at first did not give to the affair any importance, the terrified inhabitants appealed to this Consulate. I warned Reshad Bey that the object of the mob was, in all likelihood, plunder, and that his imperative duty was to have the ringleaders immediately arrested. This was done, and the quarter resumed its normal aspect of security.

A remarkable case of abduction took place at Katir-Keui in September. The young and comely wife of a Greek villager seized the fancy of a local Bey. He carried her off and shut her up in his harem. Finding her unyielding, he took his victim to the Acting Mudir of Ouloubeg, who gave her a sound beating, and then imprisoned her husband and father-in-law on the charge of having inspired her with abhorrence for a Moslem master and aversion for the true religion. The Kaimakam of Ordou, however, acted correctly in the matter, and the persecution ceased before it was brought to my knowledge.

Early in August a Special Commission arrived from Constantinople. It left within a fortnight for Rigeh, went to Samsoun, and is now in the Sivas Vilayet. Its members are Lieutenant-General Mustafa Pasha, Major-General Bekir Nigami Pasha, Major-General Veli Pasha; Lieutenant-Colonel Servet Bey, and Major Abdullafet Bey. The mission of these military men is to inquire into, and report upon, the administrative and economical affairs of this and other provinces.

It will, I think, be readily admitted that the soldier in Turkey is less corrupt than the civilian; but have these gentlemen the necessary knowledge and experience to investigate thoroughly and in the minuter details the whole situation, fiscal, industrial, judicial, municipal, &c.? Some complaints were addressed to them here, but it seems they simply referred the petitions to the Departments concerned, which, in answer, penned explanations more plausible than truthful. Briefly, the public think the work of the Commission a farce. If it be so, it is a costly farce, for its members are drawing some 500*l.* a-month.

Fiscal matters are becoming more complicated as well as more burdensome. The creation of an income tax on the basis of two days' wages, salaries or incomes, to which the entire male population, between the ages of 18 and 70, is liable, has caused less stir that the new tax chargeable on animals above two years old. A villager seems willing enough to pay for himself 5 piastres a-year, but objects strongly to pay for his cow, horse or mule 10 piastres a-year; and this, presumably, not because his animal has been rated more than his person. Foreign beasts of burden employed in the transit trade, be they Persian or Russian, are also taxed, and accordingly 400 camels laden with merchandize are now detained at Ardassa, the third caravan station from Trebizond, against payment of the claim amounting to £T. 40.

The Commercial Court at Trebizond has hitherto been composed of a Turk as President, a Christian as one of the paid members, and two honorary assessors, who may be of any religion, but must, in mixed suits, be foreigners.

Latterly, however, a Turk has been appointed to replace the Armenian paid member, who has been transferred to a post in Albania, so that now all the permanent officers of the Court are Moslems. I would draw attention to the fact, and ask whether the Court so formed can be regarded as legally constituted?

How long will the ingress and egress of the Armenians be interdicted? The policy is not a wise one, and only Government Agents profit by it. The Vali takes a sensible view of the matter, and thinks the course followed, as most detrimental to the commercial, industrial, and political interests of the country. He lately embodied these opinions in a special Report, which, however, elicited the answer that no leniency or exception was to be displayed in the carrying out of these measures. Hence more than 100 Armenians, who recently chartered a vessel and returned to their homes and families at Charshamba, were seized and shipped off to Batoum, though many of them had gone to the Caucasus in search of work before the disturbances of 1895. The Central Government may not know that money in all this is playing locally a great part. It is, consequently, the poor and honest Armenians who suffer most. Were the heads of the provincial Administration allowed discretional and discriminative powers, there would be in the country fewer abuses on the part of the petty officials, and less undesirable characters from among these hard pressed and unhappy people, who seem to be equally persecuted on both sides of the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 145.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 687.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 21, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 17th instant I received a telegram from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, stating that the French Consul at Diarbekir and other officials reported the existence in that district of an alarming degree of excitement against the Christians which was only held in check by the determination of the Vali.

I saw the foreign Minister on the subject, and his Excellency promised that telegraphic instructions should be sent enjoining the adoption of every precaution for the protection of the Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 146.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 704.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 23, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 650 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul-General at Erzeroum, giving the details of the recent fighting between the Ottoman troops and bands of Armenian revolutionaries attempting to enter Turkey from across the Russian frontier.

There appear to have been three different bands, who were successively engaged by the troops, and the losses of the Armenians were estimated at over sixty and those of the troops at about forty.

Mr. Hampson considers that this desperate move of the Armenian insurgents has entirely failed, and that there were no signs of any desire to assist them on the part of the Armenians on this side of the frontier.

I have just received a further despatch (of which a copy is inclosed) from Erzeroum, stating that there has been no further fighting near the frontier and that everything there seems now quiet. A considerable number of revolutionaries, however, are said to have escaped to Sassoun or to be hiding in the villages. Mr. Hampson draws attention to the absence of any pillaging or excesses on the part of the troops engaged in these operations.

I have also received a report from Mr. Hampson to the effect that the idea of offensive operations against the revolutionaries at Sassoun has been abandoned, and that the troops have come down from the mountains. This measure is in conformity with the statement made to me by the Porte, as reported in my despatch No. 620 of the 2nd instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 146.

Acting Consul-General Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 9, 1903.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 36 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to give the following details of the events near the frontier.

On the night of the 30th September a band of about eighty Armenians, mostly mounted, and all well armed, crossed from Russia into Passin, and reached the village of Taihoja.

There a single Mussulman villager held them at bay until the arrival of a detachment of about forty soldiers. The Armenians then took up a strong position in a disused fort, and fighting went on during the whole of the 1st October, the Armenians losing about thirty-five killed; the soldiers, who had been gradually reinforced until they slightly outnumbered the enemy, about twenty. That night the Armenians dispersed, a small band of about fifteen retiring to the village of Yuzveren, where they occupied a stable. The soldiers followed them, and, not knowing their position, suffered a loss of ten or twelve men by the fire suddenly opened on them from the stable. This, and the heavy rain which came on, forced the soldiers to take shelter, and the Armenians took advantage of this to retire across the frontier.

On the 2nd October a second band, of about fifty, crossed into Passin to Komassor, where a fight occurred on the 3rd, in which both sides suffered some losses; but that night this band also was driven back across the frontier.

On the 4th a third band attempted to cross into Alashgird, further towards the south-east, but were met and driven back, a few casualties occurring on each side.

Since then no further fighting has taken place; and the Vali assures me that all is quiet. He believes that most of those who recrossed the frontier were captured by Russian troops who had come up.

His Excellency puts the losses of the Armenians at over sixty, the losses of the troops being about forty. He says that all necessary measures have been taken to meet any further attacks; additional mounted police and a considerable supply of ammunition having been sent to the frontier; and he appears to have no anxiety for the future.

Two battalions of infantry, one from Khinis, the other from Dersim, are on their way here as a measure of precaution.

Outside the actual fighting, no disorders of any sort appear to have occurred, the inhabitants remaining quiet.

It would seem as if this desperate move on the part of the revolutionaries had entirely failed; and, as the Vali says, the ultimate result may be good. On the one hand, the revolutionaries have seen that they can hope for no assistance from the Armenians on this side of the frontier; on the other hand, the Government and Mussulman population have received proof of the loyalty of the Armenians here. Moreover, the fact that the population in general has remained perfectly quiet during these events is most reassuring. Such feeling as has been shown has been directed against Russia.

The Vali has taken every precaution, and has done much to maintain confidence, constantly walking about the bazaars, &c.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

P.S.—The Armenians seem to have fought desperately. The Vali told me of one man who, lying on the ground with six bullet wounds, continued to fire his revolver. I believe that only three prisoners have been taken. The bands are said to have been formed chiefly of Armenians from Georgia, and the language they spoke was Georgian. They are accused of having committed outrages, and cut off the noses of Mussulman villagers.

C. S. H.

Inclosure 2 in No. 146.

Acting Consul-General Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 38.)

Erzeroum, October 13, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to my preceding despatch of the 9th instant, I have the honour to state that there has been no further fighting near the frontier, and that everything there seems now quiet.

A considerable number of the revolutionaries are said to have escaped to Sassoun or to be hiding in the villages, and it is feared that they may cause trouble.

Ten prisoners have been brought here, half of whom are said to be Russian subjects.

I desire to call your Excellency's attention to the admirable manner in which Ahmed Abouk Pasha has carried out these operations, and especially to the absence of any pillaging or excesses in the villages, against which the strictest orders were given. This would undoubtedly have been far otherwise had not the Vali wisely insisted on Ahmed Pasha being in command over the head of the notorious Tewfik Pasha, who is Commandant on the frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 147.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 705.)

Therapia, October 23, 1903.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches from the British Consul at Damascus reporting the trial and condemnation of fourteen members of the sect of the Ismailians on a charge of treason and murder, and an interesting Memorandum for which I am indebted to Mr. Alvarez.

The Ismailians, of which the mediæval assassins were a branch are numerically insignificant in Turkey and are to be found chiefly in Syria though there are also a few in the vicinity of Bagdad and Mosul. They are schismatic alike with regard to the Shiite and Sunnite forms of the Moslem faith, but they carefully conceal their religious opinions and outwardly conform to the precepts of Islam, and have thus escaped persecution except when local fanaticism has led to their denunciation. Their supreme Head, however, His Highness the Agha Khan, G.C.I.E. (Sultan Mahmud Shah) was well received by His Majesty the Sultan when I presented him on his visit to Constantinople in 1901 as reported in my despatch No. 27 of the 21st January of that year.

The condemnation of Sheikh Ahmed to death and of his followers to imprisonment in so far as it is founded on charges of treason and disloyalty expressed by the rejection of the Sultan's Caliphate seems to affect not only the Ismailian religious tenets but also those of all the Shias within the Empire and will no doubt create an impression both in Persia and in India.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 147.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30.)

Damascus, April 7, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that a trial is now taking place here in the criminal section of the Court of Appeal, which, owing to the religious tenets of the prisoners and the extreme perplexity of the bench as to how to treat the charges brought against them is not devoid of a certain interest.

The accused persons, who are fourteen in number, belong to the sect of the Ismailich, known in the time of the crusaders as "assassins," a corruption of the Arabic word "Hashshashên" consumers of "Hashish" or Indian hemp. They come from the Caza of Selimieh in the Sanjak of Hamah and have been here in prison about

two years being charged by some of the chief inhabitants of that town with the habitual utterance of disloyal if not actually treasonable sentiments as regards the Sultan, and, in any case, of entertaining religious views of so extraordinary and subversive a character as to constitute a positive danger for the State and its peaceably inclined and law abiding subjects.

They were examined first by the Mustantik (Jugé d'Instruction), the Muddaï Aumoumi (Procureur Général) and the President of the criminal section of the Court of Appeal being also present. At the conclusion of this preliminary investigation the prisoners were in due course put on their trial before the Court of Appeal, in which four sittings have been already held without there being any immediate prospect of the proceedings being brought to a satisfactory termination. This is the more intelligible when I state that there are some fifty witnesses to be heard.

The chief specific charges brought against these men are as follows:—

1. The abandonment of Islam and a disavowal of its tenets as laid down in the Koran and the Hadeeth.

2. The non-recognition of the Sultan as Caliph, the only person who in their eyes has a valid claim to that title being a certain "Sultan Mohammed Shah," who is said to be residing in Bombay and who claims to be a lineal descendant from Fatima the daughter of the prophet and wife of Ali. This personage is held by them to be an absolute and final judge in all civil and religious matters, being even authorized by God to annul and repudiate the existing text of the Koran and to promulgate new commandments whenever he thinks fit.

3. The levying of taxes amongst the members of their community, the proceeds of which are dispatched from time to time to the said Sultan Mohammed Shah in Bombay.

4. The belief in the doctrine rigidly inculcated that injury done to non-believers, *i.e.*, all those who are not Ismailich is not only permissible but praiseworthy, and so many crimes have been committed by the prisoners and their co-religionists, as the immediate outcome of such teaching.

5. Their estimation of Mohammed Shah is far above the Sultan; for whereas the latter is only Sovereign of this country and a mere terrestrial Monarch, the former is an omnipotent and omnipresent being whose "material envelope" only is to be found in Bombay, whereas his "divine impalpable essence" pervades the whole universe.

I understand that three of the prisoners have already denied their faith, but the rest seem resolute in their admission of the accuracy (in the main) of the tenets imputed to them, which, however, they will not allow to be of a dangerous or treasonable character, they, personally, at all events, having no criminal intentions or views. I understand that the prisoners have made an earnest appeal to the local authorities, that they should be tried elsewhere than in Damascus where they maintain that the public feeling against them is so strong that they have little chance of receiving a fair hearing and an equitable sentence. They have proposed that the venue should be changed to Mecca, Bagdad, Bussorah, or the Lebanon.

I will report to your Excellency again on this subject, as the denouncement seems likely to be interesting.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 147.

Acting Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 75.)

Damascus, October 7, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to Mr. Consul Richards' despatch No. 30 of the 7th April, I have the honour to report that the trial of fourteen members of the Ismailian sect on the charges of treason and murder under the Ottoman Penal Code, their treason consisting in their rejection of the Sultan's Caliphate and their alleged murderous acts of violence being ascribed to their religious fanaticism, ended ten days ago in the sentence to death on Sheikh Ahmed, Chief of the sect; to fifteen years' imprisonment on two of his followers; and to three years' imprisonment on the rest of the fourteen.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 147.

Memorandum by Consul Alvarez.

THE Ismaïlians or Ismaïlites (in Arabic Ismaïlia) otherwise known as Bathenia, those who admit the authority of the internal, hidden, or allegorical sense of the Koran and deny that of the apparent and literal meaning of the text, constitute one of the Mahommedan sects generally considered "Shia," or heretical, in opposition to the Sunnite or Orthodox Moslems.

They are to be found chiefly in Syria (although there are also a few in the vicinity of Bagdad and Mosul), in the districts and villages of Selamia, at Massyad, and three or four villages in its immediate vicinity, in the Sandjak of Hama, Killis on the borders of the Provinces of Haleb and Hama, south of Schogher, on the Orontes, and at Keftan, Kadmos, Kohf, Aleyka, and Merkab, in the Jebel Kulbié, in the Sandjak of Latakia.

There may also be a few in Homs, Hama, and Tripoli, although this cannot be asserted with any certainty, as, owing to the disfavour, if not persecution, they meet with from Mussulman authorities they carefully conceal their religious opinions and outwardly conform to the precepts of Islam.

Massyad is apparently the chief seat of the sect from of old. The castle there having been in its possession from 1107, when the followers of the Ismaïlian Day, Hassan-ben-Sabbah seized it. After the downfall of the Haschaschyn, better known in Europe as the Assassins, a branch of the sect, a number of Ismaïlites appear to have been allowed to remain in their native villages by the Sultan of Egypt, Malek-ed-Daher.

In 1807 they were attacked in a most treacherous manner by a branch of the Ansarié (with which sect they have always been at enmity on account of religious differences), but who had been received with open arms by their Chief, Mustapha Loghoby-ben-Suleyman, and most hospitably treated for a period of three months; 300 of the sect perished, and those families which succeeded in making good their escape by the sacrifice of all their property fled to Hama, Homs, and Tripoli. After sacking the town the Ansarié, who had received reinforcements, successfully attacked three other Ismaïlian castles in the mountains. They were in their turn attacked, routed, and driven out in the same year by Jusuf Pasha, Vali of Damascus, at the head of an army of 4,000 or 5,000 men, but the Pasha kept the ill-gotten booty of the Ansarié for himself.

When Jusuf Pasha was exiled in 1810, the Ismaïlians were allowed to return to their ruined villages. The date of the origin of the sect which was originally established in Khorassan and on the Indus, cannot be fixed with any certainty, but in any case was not anterior to the year of the Hegira 148, A.D. 765, the year of the death of Imam Jafar-es-Sadyk, father of Ismaïl, from whom the sect took its name. On Jafar's death some Shias refused to admit the legitimate succession as Imam of his second son, Musa-al-Kazim (Restrainer of anger), and attributed spiritual headship to his elder brother Ismaïl, who, after having been designated Imam by his father, had been deposed from that office on account of his parent's having seen him drunk on one occasion.

This intoxication is considered by the Ismaïlians as a proof that he accepted the hidden meaning of the Koran as the expounder of Islam, even while violating its teaching! Ismaïl having died in his father's lifetime, his son Mahomet was recognized as his successor. Thereby the Ismaïlians cut themselves off from communion with the two main bodies of Imamia, viz., those of Persia and India, who believe in the legitimate succession to the Imamate, or spiritual headship of Islam of the Prophet's son-in-law Ali, and the hereditary transmission of the same to Hassan, Hussein, Ali Zeyn-ul-Abedyn, Mahomet Bakyr, Jafar Sadyk, Musa-al-Kazym, Reza, Mahomet Taky, Ali Naky, Hassan-al-Askary, and Mahomet Ab-ul-Kasem-al-Mahdy, and those of Arabia and Yemen, known as Zeydia from their belief in the legitimate succession as Fifth Imam of Zeyd, son of Ali Zeyn-ul-Abedyn.

In addition to the belief in the direct transmission of spiritual leadership through Mahomet, son of Ismaïl, known among the sect as Al Kaym-ez-Zeman (Ruler of the Age), and the seven Imams, known as the Hidden in consequence of the persecution of the Abbasid Caliphs, their principal dogma, as formerly enunciated by the fourth of these Hidden Imams, Abdallah-ben-Maymun-al-Kaddah (the Occultist) first in Irak, then at Bussorah, and, finally, at Selamia in 864 or 865, is the belief that the Deity is a Being

without attributes or association and inaccessible to thought or beyond the bounds of imagination, that universal reason, which was one with Him, is His manifestation to the world in order that mankind may comprehend and worship Him. The universal soul is in its turn a creation of reason.

Primary force or matter has been created by the soul, and in its turn has produced space and time. The tendency of the universal soul is to elevation and reproduction of universal reason; when this shall have been attained every movement will cease, and the reunion of universal reason with the Deity will take place. That the salvation of the human soul may be ensured it must acquire the knowledge transmitted to it by a Prophet, the incarnation of reason, for the elevation of the universal soul.

On account of the shortness of human life reason has been successively incarnated in Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ the Messiah, Mahomet, and Mahomet the son of Ismaïl, the seven Embya-i-Nathekyn speaking Prophets.

The soul has in its turn been successively incarnated in the bases, or Silent Vicars, Esasyn or Sametyn, so called because they taught nothing new, viz., Seth, Shem, Ismaïl (Ishmael), Aaron, Joshua, Simon, Peter, Cephas, and Ali. Immediately after these come the seven Imams, who, after the mysterious disappearance of Mahomet-ben-Ismaïl, who is immortal and impalpable, are but his mortal and visible representatives. Every duly initiated member of the sect is supposed to be enrolled in Mahomed-bin-Ismail's service, to be ready to follow him when he shall eventually reappear.

The initiated were at first divided into seven and afterwards into nine classes or grades. The first or lowest class comprises those proselytes who, being of a simple character, or incapable of much thought, are taught by their "day" (man of prayer, Prior) that religion is a secret science, and that only a few beings such as the Imams, who are privileged, can penetrate its mysteries. To impress his imagination, the Day will ask him to explain why God created the world in seven days, why there seven verses in the Fatcha, why man has ten fingers and ten toes, &c., and will teach him that passages of the Koran cited are so mysterious that they can only be interpreted allegorically, and that before his initiation he must bind himself by oath to the Ismaïlians. The greatest discretion in initiation, especially if the initiated be a learned or superior person, is to be observed, &c.

In the second degree the companion or neophyte is taught by arguments drawn from the text of the Koran, or founded on reason that the Imams are the only representatives of divine authority on earth.

In the third grade the candidate is instructed in the dogma which distinguishes Ismaïlites from other Shias, viz., the belief in the apostolic succession of the seven hereditary Imams, &c.

With the fourth degree of initiation the belief in the prophetic speakers and their seven Silent Vicars, and the teaching that the Kaym Ez Zeman is the *ne plus ultra* of old doctrine, Alpha and Omega, key of science and mystery, is inculcated. This belief is fundamentally incompatible with a belief in the finality of the prophetic mission of Mahomet, the khatem embya, or seal of the prophets, and consequently the initiates of this and higher grades cease to be Moslems.

The fifth grade comprises those philosophers who are taught to despise the traditions (Hadith) looked upon as the necessary compliment of the sacred teachings of the Koran, and the legal observances imposed by the text of the book.

The sixth, those who are taught that no legal Ordinance is literally obligatory on those who are acquainted with its hidden and mystic meaning, and that such laws have been divinely established for the common herd, for the maintenance and repose of society. Reverence for ancient philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras is inculcated in this degree, beyond which many, if not most, of the Days do not go.

There are, however, three other grades comprising—

1. Those Days who are taught to believe in two principles, that of the supreme giver or male superior principle, and that of the female or inferior, but fertile principle.

2. Those who study the nature and origin of these two principles; and finally

3. Those who follow the philosophical system which attracts each individual most, whether unitarian, dualist, materialist, pantheist, or rationalist, &c., or believe in a combination of them.

These initiates are respectively entitled Daylkebir or Grand Prior, Khoja or Master, and Soheykh or Elder.

It may be of interest to state that the Sultan Mahomed Shah, mentioned by Consul Richards as being the supreme head of the sect, is his Highness the Agha Khan, G.C.I.E., who some years ago, Mr. Block informs me, while on his way to London to attend the celebration of Her late Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, passed through Constantinople, and was graciously received by His Majesty the Sultan. He also attended, I believe, at His Majesty King Edward's Coronation last year.

With regard to the charges of treason and disloyalty, i.e., rejection of the Sultan's Caliphate, &c., brought against Sheikh Ahmed, the head of the sect in Syria, and thirteen of his disciples, while I can express no opinion on the charges of murder which may have been brought against them. There can be no doubt that the effect of this prosecution is to penalize the profession, not only of Ismailian religious tenets, but also those of all Shias within the Empire who do not recognize the Sultan's pretensions to the Caliphate, or even the existence of that supreme dignity.

This is the impression that will doubtless be created by the sentences (especially the sentence of death imposed on Sheikh Ahmed) pronounced against the prisoners throughout the Islamic world, and especially in Persia and India.

(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

October 22, 1903.

No. 148.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 710.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 23, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the augmentation of the infantry battalions of the 7th Army Corps, in view of further trouble with Armenian revolutionaries on the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 148.

Acting-Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October* 13, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that orders have been received here to fill the infantry battalions of the 7th Division of the Army Corps up to 1,000 men each. Each battalion now consists of little over 400 men, and their nominal complement is only 800. The men will be taken from those of the two last years' conscriptions who were not called upon to serve.

One squadron of each regiment of Hamidié cavalry in the division is also to be called to the flag.

These measures are rendered necessary by the small number of troops now in the district, and by the fear of further trouble on the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 149.

Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 364.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 29, 1903.

FOR some time past the news from the Caucasus has been of a somewhat alarming character. Besides the strikes of a very violent description which have broken out at Tiflis and Baku and the riots which have followed on the confiscation of the Armenian Church property, it appears that the semi-savage tribes of the Caucasus have been for some time conducting operations of brigandage on an extended scale.

At first isolated bands attacked farm-houses by night; then they looted banks in broad daylight in some of the principal country towns; then it was reported that the stations on the line from Vladikavkas to Petrovsk were frequently in the possession of armed bands, who "held up" trains and robbed passengers. Grown bolder, the bands commenced to attack military stations, overpowering the guards and seizing arms and ammunition, and military detachments were attacked at night in their camps.

Finally, it is announced to-day that the Governor-General, Prince Galitzine, was attacked by the brigands as he was driving with his wife in the neighbourhood of Tiflis. The object which appears to have been openly announced before was evidently to stun him and to carry him off, and hold him to ransom. The attempt failed owing to the courage of the Cossack who accompanied the Prince, and the three brigands were pursued and killed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

No. 150.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 712.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October* 27, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 687 of the 21st instant, respecting a reported anti-Christian agitation in Diarbekir, I have the honour to state that the Sublime Porte have received a telegram from the Vali of that province emphatically denying the truth of the report, and affirming that there is no friction between the Christians and the Moslems. It is not possible to concur in this view, but I trust that some good may have been done by calling the earnest attention of the Sublime Porte to the reports I received on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 151.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 4.)

(No. 717.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 29, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from Mr. Hampson, Acting Consul at Erzeroum, as to the reported strength and organization of the Armenian revolutionaries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 151.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October* 19, 1903.

IT is very difficult to obtain reliable information as to the numbers, organization, and plans of the Armenian revolutionaries ("Fedai") in Sassoun, and it is with great hesitation that I report to your Excellency the following details which have reached me.

According to these statements, the "Fedai" have gained greatly in numbers and strength lately. They are said to number now between 5,000 and 6,000, all well armed, drilled, and organized. They are completely masters of the mountains south of the Moush Plain, and their authority extends to many villages in the plain, and, to a large extent, to the town of Moush itself.

Their Chief, Andronik, is a very able man, and is implicity obeyed. The military organization is under the command of a certain Tounanoff, an Armenian from the Caucasus, who was in the Russian army, and is said to have been an officer.

What the plans of the "Fedai" may be I am unable to say; but, if these reports are true, it seems certain that, in the near future, they may be expected to play an important rôle in this country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 152.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 301.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, November 4, 1903.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 687 of the 25th October, relative to the existence of alarming anti-Christian feeling in the neighbourhood of Diarbekir.

I approve your conversation with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, as reported in your despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 153.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 585.)
My Lord, *Paris, November 6, 1903.*

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 616 of the 8th ultimo respecting the negotiations which have been going on for some time respecting the Bagdad Railway scheme, I have the honour to inclose herewith a Memorandum which has been furnished to me by Mr. O'Beirne, Second Secretary at His Majesty's Embassy, containing some information of what has occurred recently at Paris, which your Lordship will find to be of considerable interest and importance.

As your Lordship will see, the views of M. Delcassé have prevailed against the support given by his colleague, the Minister of Finance, to the project favoured by the French capitalists. The grounds of M. Delcassé's opposition were based on the preponderance which would be given by that project to German management.

I was visited the day before yesterday by a Russian journalist whose acquaintance I made many years ago, and who was staying in Paris almost entirely for the purpose of contributing to the efforts made to prevent Germany from obtaining the predominance above alluded to; and he told me that he had employed himself in every direction in advocating the policy of making the railway a really international undertaking, and not allowing it to fall into purely German hands, as it would otherwise eventually do.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.

Inclosure in No. 153.

Memorandum.

I HEAR on very good authority that the Bagdad Railway question was considered recently at a Council of Ministers, and, although the Minister of Finance expressed himself in favour of the Government's supporting the proposed arrangement between the French capitalists interested and the Anatolian Railway Company, M. Delcassé strongly opposed this course, and the Council decided against giving the Government's support. The main ground for their decision was the preponderance in management which would be given to the Germans by the appointment of Dr. Gwinner as President and Dr. Zander as Managing Director (as reported by Sir N. O'Conor in his despatch No. 646), notwithstanding the conditions apparently securing the French group

equality with the Germans as regards contribution of capital and seats on the Council of Administration.

It does not seem to be yet known what course the French group (which is represented by the Hottinguer Bank) will take in view of the decision of the Government. Baron Hottinguer gave me to understand some time ago that he would go on with the scheme even if the Government withheld its support. But one effect of the Government's opposition will be to prevent the shares of the Company from being quoted officially in the Paris Bourse; and people in a position to judge consider that the French public are so entirely indifferent to the scheme that it will be difficult to induce them to subscribe to it largely.

(Signed) H. O'BEIRNE.

Paris, November 6, 1903.

No. 154.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 727.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 5, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout on the subject of Christian emigration from that city.

I have sent a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 154.

Acting Consul-General Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 136.)
Sir, *Beyrout, October 22, 1903.*

WITH reference to a paragraph in my quarterly Report, I would beg to be allowed to submit a few remarks touching the existing somewhat critical condition of affairs in this city.

As stated in the despatch under reference, the continuous departure from Beyrout, for Egypt and other countries, of Christians of all classes of society, constituting, as it does, a movement which is likely to assume disquieting proportions (I am informed that, according to the calculations of well-informed persons, some eighty families will be leaving the city in the course of the next two months), has become a matter which requires serious consideration both, and of course, chiefly, from the authorities and from all those who take an interest in the well-being and future prospects of this city.

Many of these emigrants belong to the richest and, socially speaking, the most considered Greek Orthodox families here, people who own large properties in houses and lands in the city and neighbourhood, and whose money spent freely here has indirectly contributed in no small degree to the support and well-being of thousands of their fellow townsmen, Moslems as well as Christians. The cause of this emigration is undoubtedly a general feeling of insecurity, of risk for life and property, which the events of the 6th September and a dread of their recurrence on a much larger scale have created in the minds of Christians of all ranks in life. That these apprehensions have any serious foundation in fact I hesitate to believe, though perhaps my short residence here hardly entitles me to speak with any authority. The feeling—I may say, the conviction—is, however, there, and whether it be termed unreasoning panic, as some maintain, or only an exaggerated estimate of very real possibilities, as others aver, the fact of its existence remains the same.

I had a long conversation very recently on this subject with Mgr. M'sarra, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Beyrout, who is an intelligent man with, I should say, a keen insight into, and familiarity with, the undercurrents of Greek social and religious life here, and he assures me that he considers the situation decidedly critical. I was somewhat

surprised to hear from him that, plead as he might with intending emigrants—and your Excellency will readily understand with what eloquence he must have spoken, seeing that this emigration of the richest members of his community is a matter of the greatest moment to their Bishop—he has failed entirely to convince them of the groundlessness of their fears. They asked me, he said, for a guarantee that the Moslems would not attack the Christians again, and what guarantee was he in a position to give them, he, whose last appearance at the Government House has been the signal for some very audible and very insolent remarks from a Moslem crowd. Mgr. M'sarra told me that he had been to see the Vali on two or three occasions, and that as the latter speaks Greek fluently (he is an Albanian of Argyrocastro), a language with which he is perfectly familiar himself (the Bishop was educated in the Greek Theological College of Halki), their intercourse was perfectly free and unimpeded by the obstacle which is always cropping up in this country, where the ruling class knows only Turkish, while the governed know nothing but Arabic. The Bishop admits that the Vali was very glib with promises and assurances, though as to how far he might be relied upon in an emergency he was less confident.

I have laid the serious nature of the situation before the Vali myself, and I am bound to acknowledge that he expressed concern and a wish to do all that lay within him to remedy the evil. He assured me that he had always taken, and was still taking, all possible measures to secure public tranquillity, but with panic, he not unreasonably pointed out to me, it is always very difficult to deal. His hope was that when those who have left the country see and hear some months hence that the massacre which they anticipated has not taken place, they will return to Beyrout. I am not so sure of that: a feeling of security once eradicated is very slow to show new growth, and a man who is comfortably settled in Egypt, which to Syrians, it must be remembered, is not like a foreign country, will think many times before he returns to the home of misrule and oppression, even though it be his native land. In the meantime credit generally is at a very low ebb, and trade is in a state of semi-stagnation, which, of course, is only aggravated by the long-continued quarantine both on land and sea, and rumours of cholera coming in from all sides.

I should state that I asked Bishop M'sarra what suggestions he could make with a view to re-establish, if possible, a feeling of security. He replied that the panacea which was in all men's thoughts and mouths was the annexation of Beyrout to the Lebanon. On my pointing out to him that this is quite out of the question, especially at the present critical juncture of affairs in Macedonia, he asked if I thought it possible that a Christian Mu'awin (Assistant) might be attached to the Valian appointment, the wisdom and advisability of which, in Vilayets containing a large Christian population, has been admitted and acted upon by the Porte in several cases in the past. If this were done, and if a considerable number of Christians were enrolled in the ranks of the police, he seemed to think that a feeling of confidence might after a time spring up again, and waverers, at all events, might be induced to stay.

I said that I thought such a proposal might not prove altogether inadmissible, seeing that the measure had already been recognized as expedient in principle.

The Bishop went on to ask if I thought it possible that, if and when the American war-ships left these waters they might be succeeded by British vessels, in which the people of this country have more confidence than in those of any other Power.

He pointed out that for many years after the events of 1860 a British man-of-war was always cruising up and down this coast, without calling forth any remonstrances from the Turkish Government. What objection was there, he argued, to do now, when men's minds are so much disturbed, what was done continuously and systematically in those days.

I made no remark one way or the other, but on his pressing me to lay the gist of his observations before your Excellency, I promised to do so.

I need only repeat that, having spoken on this subject lately with a great many persons, natives and foreigners, they are all agreed that the condition of things is serious, and that something should be done to remedy it.

In conclusion, I would mention what was pointed out to me the other day by a well-informed and observant person, viz., that whereas in the past all the wealth of this city has been in the hands of Christians, it is rapidly changing hands, and the Moslems are creeping in everywhere. This process is receiving and will, as time goes on, still more receive a tremendous impulse from this wholesale emigration of Christians; so that should this movement continue for a lengthened period, the balance of wealth, and therefore influence, will be redressed entirely in favour of the

Moslems. This being so, it is quite possible that the authorities who receive inspiration from higher quarters, may secretly view the departure of Christians with considerable satisfaction, whatever they may say to the contrary.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 155.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 733.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 6, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 710 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, reporting a correction in the order received there to raise the infantry battalions to 1,000 men.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 155.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 44.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 26, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 40 of the 13th instant, I have the honour to state that the order received here to raise the infantry battalions to 1,000 men each appears to have been a telegraphic error which has since been corrected, the order now being to raise the battalions to between 500 and 600 men each.

There has been some talk of the Redifs being called out, but no step in that direction has, as yet, been taken.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 156.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 742.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 6, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Colonel Maunsell, Military Attaché to this Embassy, reporting that the battalions in the Vilayets of Erzeroum and Bitlis have been reinforced owing to the activity of the Armenian revolutionaries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 156.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 61.)
Sir, *Constantinople, November 6, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have ascertained from the War Minister that, owing to the recrudescence of Armenian revolutionary activity in the Erzeroum and Bitlis Vilayets, it had been decided to increase the strength of the regular battalions serving in the disturbed districts to 550 men each, the normal strength in winter being as low as 350.

It was not intended to call out any Redif battalions. It is true that a certain

number of Armenian revolutionaries are known to be hiding in the mountains of Sassoon, but at the very most their number did not exceed 500.

But, taken in conjunction with Armenian activity across the frontier in the Trans-Caucasus, the Minister expected that the party working in Turkey would become more active, and that the situation was sufficiently serious to justify some military precautions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

No. 157.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 16.)

(No. 752.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 11, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah telegraphs that there have been troubles amongst the Arab tribes inhabiting the country between Bagdad and the Shat-el-Arab, and that troops have intervened, and have suffered considerable loss. The Vali of Bussorah has requisitioned further reinforcements from Bagdad, and has asked for permission to proceed personally to the scene of the disturbances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 158.

Sir C. Greene to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 55. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Berne, November 18, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 49, Confidential, of the 12th ultimo, and to previous correspondence on the the subject of proposed Bagdad Railway Company, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a letter, dated yesterday, which I have received from Mr. Falck, His Majesty's Consul at Lucerne, in which he reports that advices received from Brussels declare that a complete understanding has been arrived at between the German and French financial groups.

The accompanying extract from to-day's "Journal de Genève"* conveys the same information as coming from Berlin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CONYNGHAM GREENE.

Inclosure in No. 158.

Consul Falck to Sir C. Greene.

M. le Ministre, *Lucerne, le 17 Novembre, 1903.*

LES dépêches de Bruxelles d'hier disent qu'un accord complet ait eu lieu entre les groupes financiers Allemands et Français. La Deutsche Bank prendrait 40 pour cent du capital Chemin de Fer de Bagdad, 30 pour cent les Français (Banque Ottomane), 20 pour cent les autres nations, 10 pour cent la Société des Chemins de Fer d'Anatolie—c'est-à-dire que les Allemands contrôleraient 40 + 10 = 50 pour cent du capital, ce qui, sans parler des "autres nations," équivaut à la majorité.

L'Angleterre aura bien ses raisons pour attendre un moment plus propice avant de s'engager dans cette entreprise remplie d'aléas et de complications de toutes sortes. Elle peut attendre.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) LOUIS FALCK.

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* Not printed.

No. 159.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 763.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 17, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the calling out of Hamidieh troops and the demand of the Vali that they should be withdrawn from the villages in which they had been quartered owing to the complaints against their conduct.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 159.

Acting Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 47.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 4, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to report that ten squadrons of the Hamidieh troops were called out directly after the encounters with Armenian revolutionaries, reported in Mr. Acting Consul Hampson's Nos. 35 and 36 of the 3rd and 6th ultimo, and distributed along the frontier and in and about ten villages in the plain of the Araxis.

As was only natural, complaints of ill-treatment began coming in at once from the villagers, but, owing to circumstances, do not seem to have been received with much sympathy in any quarter.

An incident, however, that occurred to my party on our way here, and which I reported to the Vali, gave me the opportunity of pointing out to his Excellency that the presence in Armenian villages of Kurds who had only just stopped short of personal violence to a Consul and his escort, and whose Chief (a Hamidieh officer) refused to come and apologize, was not calculated to hasten the restoration of that tranquillity which had existed before the untoward events of last month, and which his Excellency, I knew, desired above all people to see restored.

My French and Russian colleagues made similar representations, the latter, I may add, guaranteeing the impossibility of fresh Armenian bands crossing the Russian frontier till next spring.

The Vali informed me this morning that he had demanded the withdrawal of the Hamidieh troops from the villages and their concentration at Kassim Kaleh and Erzeroum, with a view to their ultimate disbanding in a week or ten days' time. They are, where necessary, to be replaced by Regulars.

The Vali has, moreover, given orders that the troops are to deliver receipts for all foods which they may take from the villagers, and I am trustworthily informed that this is being done.

Every one seems agreed that this vilayet is absolutely tranquil, and likely to remain so during the winter months.

News from Diarbekir is equally reassuring.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

No. 160.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 764.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 17, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting Armenian revolutionary movements in that neighbourhood and a Turco-Armenian fight near Délibaba.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 160.

Vice-Consul Tyrrell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Van, October 27, 1903.*

AS there have been many rumours concerning the incursions of armed bands of Armenian revolutionists from Russia and Persia, and as these rumours appear to be spread in Constantinople and to reach the European press, I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency, without loss of time, with the facts, as far as I could ascertain them on the spot, of a recent affair which has caused some sensation here, and probably been exaggerated everywhere.

Fuller details of the tour from which I have just returned and road reports will be sent later.

It was while in the Bulanik district that I first heard fairly well-authenticated news of revolutionists. There the Military Commandant, Ahmed Pasha, Ferik of the 4th Cavalry Division, expressed himself as uneasy at my travelling without a military escort, and told me that armed revolutionists had crossed the frontier west of the Kousse Dagh, and that, though there had been fighting there, many of them had forced their way through the Turkish troops, were lurking in the Kortevin Dagh, north of Melasgird, and intended to reach Sassun to join the revolutionists, whom the Turks always believe to be there in force. As I went north from Melasgird I came across no traces of them, and had no news of any such bands being in the vicinity; and I think Ahmed Pasha's apprehensions were groundless, and that no revolutionists had hitherto reached the neighbourhood of Melasgird, nor succeeded in getting far beyond the Russian frontier.

At Patnotz I heard of revolutionists (500 to 1,000, according to fancy) having crossed the frontier, of severe fighting at Delibaba, and that the Armenian village of Delibaba had been sacked and burnt by the Turkish soldiers. As my intention had been to go to Kara-Kilissé, I decided to make a short detour and visit Delibaba *en route*.

On my way thither I found the people apprehensive of further incursions, and that it was generally believed that such revolutionists as had already arrived had done so at the instigation of Russian officials, and that numbers more were being armed in Russia and were preparing to cross the frontier. The local Hamidieh Kurds were having arms issued to them, and were being organized to assist the troops against the threatened invasion. I met an ammunition train on its way to Kara-Kilissé, and there were evidences that the Turks were reinforcing their garrisons in the Alashgird Plain.

I found that the rumours as to Delibaba were absolutely false. I spent a night in the village. There had been fighting near it; but no harm had been done in the village itself, nor, so far as I could see, had the inhabitants suffered in any way. The Turks were strengthening their cordons on the frontier, and a second battalion had been sent from Erzeroum to Delibaba (one battalion is permanently stationed in the latter place). Ahmed Pasha, Liva of the 13th Infantry Brigade, had come from Erzeroum to inquire into the circumstances and supervise preventive arrangements. He was distributing arms to some of the local Hamidieh regiments, and it was by his orders that extra ammunition was being sent to Alashgird.

It would appear that the whole affair had been much exaggerated, and the facts would seem to be somewhat as follows:—

One hundred and twenty revolutionists, all armed, and of whom about forty were mounted, crossed the frontier near Mejingird during the first few days in October. They were working towards Delibaba, with the intention of going south from there. There was fighting with the Turkish troops at the villages of Tahir Khoja, Khumasor, and Yuz Veren, and between the latter place and Delibaba. Practically, all the revolutionists were killed; but not before a detachment of Turkish cavalry had been ambuscaded, and lost two Captains, one Lieutenant, and seven men. The Turkish infantry also suffered some casualties during the fighting. The dead are said to have been mutilated by the revolutionists, whose object is believed to be to rouse the Turks to ferocity, and to make them retaliate on harmless villagers and to commit atrocities, and so attract outside attention.

Ahmed Pasha told me that four or five revolutionists had been captured alive, and had been sent to Erzeroum as prisoners. I do not know if this is true. He said that these men bore Russianized names, and that they had declared that they meant to go to Sassun, and that there were others who would come. He said that nearly all the band had Russian passports, or documents showing them to be Russian subjects, and that they were all armed with the present Russian Government rifle and had Russian Government equipment, while their horses were branded so as to show they belonged to the Russian army.

On the other hand, the Bimbashi who had been actually in command during the fighting, before the arrival of Ahmed Pasha, told me that this was an exaggeration, and that, though there were Government rifles among their arms, they were by no means universally armed with them. When I asked to see the rifles, they could only show me an odd assortment of Berdans and Martinis.

They said that not a single revolutionist had been able to make his way further south, though some may possibly have escaped back towards the Russian frontier.

As far as I could ascertain from inquiry and report, the only material damage done was at Yuz Veren, where an ambar (store-house), in which some revolutionists were defending themselves, was burned. Though my movements were naturally closely observed by the Turkish officials with whom I came in contact, and certain things may have been hidden from me, I think I can say that up to that time the soldiers had behaved well and had been kept well in hand, and I saw no signs of suffering in the Armenian villages of the districts through which I passed. In addition to regular troops, the 57th, 61st, and 62nd Regiments of Hamidieh were represented in the operations which led up to the capture of this small band of revolutionists; and I met men of the 5th, 11th, and 12th Hamidieh Regiments on their way to Delibaba to receive arms.

I heard that the summons has been received by some of the Hamidieh with a distinct lack of enthusiasm, even with the prospect of pillage to which such an occasion might well give rise.

The general impression among the Turks is that there is more to follow, and that Russia is at the bottom of it. They argue that it is impossible for these bands to cross the frontier without the knowledge of the Russian Government, or, at any rate, of the Local Government and frontier officials, and that the revolutionists have Government rifles which cannot be easily stolen or obtained without official knowledge. There did not seem to be any disposition to lay the blame upon the local Armenians, nor to visit the sins of the revolutionists upon their heads.

Seeing the fate of this band, and considering the steps which the Turks have consequently taken, I am inclined to doubt if any more will venture across.

While in Alashgird and Bayezid I heard that revolutionists had crossed from Persia, and that there had been encounters with them near Van. There is no foundation whatever for these rumours.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. E. TYRRELL, *Captain.*

No. 161.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 30.)

(No. 779.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 23, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Hodeida to His Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, reporting on his visit to and five weeks' residence at Sanaa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 161.

Vice-Consul Richardson to Consul Devey.

(No. 82.)
Sir, *Hodeida, October 25, 1903.*

IN confirmation of my telegram of to-day's date I have the honour to report my return from Sanaa yesterday.

I beg to bring to notice the extreme courtesy shown to Mrs. Richardson and myself

during our five weeks' stay at the capital by the Acting Vali, Marshal Abdulla Pasha, and the civil and military officials in general.

Elaborate arrangements were made by the local authorities for our journey to and from Sanaá, and a strong escort accompanied us on both occasions.

During my residence at Sanaá I visited the Acting Vali on several occasions officially for the transaction of business, and discussed all outstanding questions between the vilayet and this Vice-Consulate with very satisfactory results.

Arrangements were also arrived at with reference to the settlement of the old claims of certain Indian merchants at Hodeida against the Yemen Government.

A favourable opportunity was afforded me of studying the general administrative state of the vilayet.

Famine was prevalent over a great area of the Yemen. My movements were restricted, and the time spent in the interior too short to give an opinion on its economic conditions.

However, I hope on a future occasion to spend a whole summer at Sanaá, and write a Report on the Yemen in general.

After an eighteen months' fruitless attempt at Hodeida I have now succeeded in obtaining reliable information of the strength and distribution of the 7th Army Corps stationed at the Yemen, and am communicating my results to the Military Attaché at His Majesty's Embassy and the Political Resident at Aden.

It was my intention of returning to Hodeida viâ Taiz, Kuttiba, and Dthala, but I had to abandon the project owing to the receipt of news indicating the hostile attitude of the Imam's adherents in the south-eastern districts.

Every assistance was rendered to enable me to move about within the environs of the capital, without let or hindrance.

The Acting Vali has assured me of a hearty welcome to Sanaá in future years.

I beg to observe with satisfaction that my visit has tended towards an amicable solution of various existing differences with the vilayet, and the establishment of cordial relations with the Acting Governor-General, which you will admit is of primary importance in this outlying and arbitrarily administered part of the Ottoman Empire.

His Excellency has further promised to grant, as far as possible, every facility to British trade and enterprise in the Yemen.

In conclusion, I respectfully request you will kindly bring to the notice of His Majesty's Government the courtesy, respect, and honour I have received at the hands of the Acting Governor-General and Commander-in-chief, Abdulla Pasha, which, I might state, considerably exceeded that entitled to by His Majesty's humble representative in this quarter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. A. RICHARDSON

No. 162.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received November* 30.)

(No. 783.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 24, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting that the Vali has tendered his resignation, and that it has been refused, and stating that tension exists between the civil and military authorities in regard to the policy respecting Sasun. I have also the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum remarking on Mr. Heathcote's despatch, and the situation in Sasun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 162.

Vice-Consul Heathcote to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Bitlis, November* 10, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to general rumour, Husni Bey, Vali of Bitlis, who is now returning from Moush, has tendered his resignation, which has been refused by the Government.

His Excellency has long professed a desire to leave Bitlis, as he is in bad health; but it is understood that the cause of his proposal to resign is the tension existing between him and the military authorities, headed by Salih Pasha, the Acting Ferik at Moush, and supported by the leading Moslems of that town.

This party consider that the revolutionaries are becoming too strong, and that Moush itself is menaced unless they are now suppressed; while the Vali holds that a punitive expedition such as they desire is unnecessary and dangerous.

This difference of opinion is so marked that, on the Vali's sudden return from here on the 16th October, hardly any one came out to meet him as is customary, and it is said that he has been seeing no one of importance in Moush.

It may be hoped that the refusal of his resignation, if true, implies an indorsement of his policy, and though, as your Excellency is aware, Husni Bey's administration has reduced the vilayet in general to the worst possible state, yet a change of Vali just now might work still greater harm, unless the new Governor were prevented from joining the military party and precipitating a conflict in Sasun.

Nothing is known here to indicate that the revolutionaries are likely to attack the Government, though doubtless they have received some reinforcements of late, and as snow as already fallen on the higher mountains, any important movement will soon be very difficult.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. HEATHCOTE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 162.

Acting Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 51.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 16, 1903.

WITH reference to Mr. Acting Consul Hampson's despatch No. 42 of the 19th October, and the inclosed report from Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that it is impossible to determine, even approximately, the number of Armenians actually under arms in the Sasun districts.

Mr. Hampson and his colleagues estimated them at from five to six thousand, and this is the estimate generally accepted here among the foreigners. The figure was reached by counting up the number of Fedaï known to have existed in Sasun last spring and those reported to have crossed into it since; the number of the male population of six villages in the immediate neighbourhood of Moush and that of the whole of Talori, and some three or four hundred youths who are missing from the town itself and are supposed to have joined the revolutionaries.

On the other hand, Mr. Vice-Consul Heathcote agrees with the local authorities here and in Bitlis and with such Armenians and Turks, coming from Moush, as I have obtained details from, in stating the number of Fedaï at no more than 300, whereas my colleagues insist on their being 1,000 at least, more probably 1,500. Mr. Heathcote does not, of course, include in this number "the villagers who may be potential revolutionaries," but these, my other informants maintain, cannot exceed 1,200.

One new feature has been introduced into the general aspect of affairs during the last few months, viz., the co-operation of the Kurds with the Armenians. It is a well known fact, that one of the reasons which deterred the Government from attacking Sasun this summer was the unexpected attitude of the Kurds, who refused to join in the proposed attack; and my French colleague now informs me that negotiations which have been going on for some time between the Kurds and Armenians have, he believes, led to a compact, whereby the Kurds shall maintain an attitude of strict neutrality, even if, as is not improbable, they do not actually take up arms in their defence if attacked.

Two facts point to the likelihood of the above statements: firstly, the Kurds, especially those of Sairt, supplied the Fedai, blockaded by the troops in Sasun, with provisions this autumn; secondly, arms and ammunition for the use of the revolutionaries are being manufactured in no small quantities by Armenian workmen in Kurdish houses in the districts affected.

With reference to Mr. Heathcote's remarks on the resignation of Husni Bey, Vali of Bitlis, I would venture to submit my opinion, that the question of an attack on Sasun next spring is one which will, or should, be decided at Constantinople, and that it was not the opposition of the Vali, but the representations of the Embassies which this summer prevented a conflict, which the authorities in this vilayet are firmly convinced must occur next spring, while they entertain the hope that it will not be allowed to degenerate into general disorders; that if the decision is allowed to rest with the local authorities in Bitlis, the Vali will certainly be forced to yield next spring to the combined pressure of the military authorities and influential Moslems; and that if this is the case and there is a conflict, the friction between the former and the latter will not unlikely prove disastrous to the last remaining shreds of influence which the Vali may have retained, and produce disorders far greater than those which would result from a campaign in which both civil and military authorities were fully agreed.

In any case, from what Mr. Heathcote reports and from what I learn here, Husni Bey's administration has reduced the Vilayet of Bitlis to a state which could hardly be rendered worse, and his removal might better the condition of the whole, even if accompanied by an operation on one part of it.

I am informed that a 20th division of the IVth Army Corps is being formed at Moush, but I have not as yet been able to obtain any details as to its organization.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. SHIPLEY.

No. 163.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 790.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 30, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the exemption of the fellaheen class of the Sanjak of Hauran from payment of the animal tax.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 163.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 82.)
Sir, *Damascus, November 16, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 80 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to report that the whole of the fellaheen class of the Sanjak of the Hauran have been exempted from payment of the new animal tax on the ground of poverty, aggravated and intensified by the long-continued quarantine consequent on the ravages of cholera during a whole year. Inasmuch as this Sanjak is essentially and exclusively agricultural, practically the whole of its population has thus been relieved from payment of this much abhorred tax.

The official reasons for this exceptional treatment are plausible, but somewhat too "thin." In the first place, the inhabitants of this district, who are composed of Moslems, *i.e.*, town Arabs, who are generally known as Hauranese, Druses, Christians (Catholics and Greeks), Circassians, and a few Bedouins are by no means poorer than their neighbours in other parts of the vilayet, and although the cholera has carried off a great number of them they have not suffered in the least from the quarantine, which would only affect their interests in case the exportation of grain were prohibited, which, however, has not been the case. As a matter of fact, the harvest was extremely good this year, and, as the traffic returns of the railway show, the exportation of grain was on a larger scale than it has been for many years past. Of course, the real reason for their exemption is the very determined and hostile attitude which they assumed when the attempt to collect the tax was made, and there can be no doubt that rather than pay it, many of them, especially the Hauranese and Druses, would have broken out into open rebellion. As reported by me in a previous despatch, urgent appeal for the dispatch of two battalions of troops was made at the time by the Mutessarif to the Mushir Hakki Pasha, to which the latter was quite unable to respond. I have little doubt that the present comparative defenceless of the vilayet in this respect weighed not a little with the Vali when he urged the authorities at Constantinople to remit the tax. The wisdom of the measure is decidedly open to objection, because it looks very much like putting a premium on rebellion. As it is, people here are saying already that it is evidently a better policy to resist the payment of this tax than to submit quietly to its imposition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 164.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 791.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 30, 1903.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 626 of the 1st October, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship, herewith, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting on the present state of affairs in that district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 164.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 148.)
Sir, *Beirout, November 19, 1903.*

WITH reference to Mr. Richards' reports on the state of affairs at Beirout, subsequent to the occurrences of the 6th September, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the panic among Christians is gradually subsiding, and the majority of those who took refuge in the mountain have either returned to the town, or settled in places within Lebanon territory from whence they are able to enter Beirout during the day for transaction of business and to return in the evening to their homes.

The number of Christians that have emigrated since September from Beirout is not much above the average, while those who have left or are intending to leave for Egypt are composed principally of Notables and the more respectable classes who possess lands or other commercial attraction which enable them to visit that country.

Both Moslems and Christians implicated in the disturbances are now under trial. Eight of the twenty-nine Moslems were acquitted by the "Ithamia" or "Chambre de mise en accusation," and there now remain two accused of murder, and nineteen of wounding and pillage; but there are still several rioters at liberty who took a serious part in the affray. Unfortunately, the judicial authorities have to be guided in their action by the police reports as the majority of the Christians who were attacked abstain from prosecuting their well-known assailants.

It is now confirmed that seven Christians were killed and an equal number wounded. On the side of the Moslems there were five killed and three wounded.

Fifteen Christians are now imprisoned, but several of them were arrested for crimes and misdemeanours committed prior to the troubles of September.

Summonses have been issued also against many others who have escaped to the Lebanon, and notwithstanding the stringent orders issued by Mouzaffer Pasha for their arrest, only three of the number have been handed over to the Vilayet authorities. The notorious criminals Halaby and Zaik are also still at large. The former has defied the authorities for twenty years, and the latter for three years.

The result of the trial will probably be the condemnation of two Moslems and five Christians for murder, and of nineteen Moslems and a few Christians for assault, &c.

The new Vali, Khalil Pasha, appears to be an able and experienced administrator, with a determined character, which has for the moment favourably impressed the general public. I beg, however, to submit that the tranquillity of Beirout will never be assured even by a capable Governor, so long as the police and gendarmerie remain in their present condition. The force requires thorough reorganization, and to be under the command of carefully selected chiefs of police and gendarmerie, assisted by Moslem and Christian officers. The ranks should also be filled by men belonging to both communities in equal numbers, as the Christian element predominates to a considerable extent in Beirout. These measures would undoubtedly restore confidence and give general satisfaction.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 165.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December 7.*)

(No. 793.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 30, 1903.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 705 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting further as to the sentence recently given against the Ismaïlians in that district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 165.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 83.)
Sir, *Damascus, November* 16, 1903.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to the usual procedure, the sentences passed on Sheikh Ahmed-el-Mohammed and his companions have been referred to the Mahkemé-i-Temyîz ("Cour de Cassation") at Constantinople, which will either confirm, modify, or quash them. It is of course extremely improbable that Sheikh Ahmed will be executed, and all the more so because the sentence cannot be justified by anything contained in Articles 55, 56, and 57 of the Ottoman Penal Code on which it is based. I am informed, on the very best authority, that in no case were the vague charges of murder brought against the accused substantiated, so that there only remain those of treason and heresy. As regards the latter charge, it was not and could not be pressed, because if all those Moslems who entertain more or less heretical opinions in religious matters were liable to criminal prosecution all the Courts throughout the country would have nothing else to do but try such cases.

Nor, strictly speaking, can the charge of treason be sustained as it is defined in the Articles of the Criminal Code, to which reference has been made; and if regard be had to the beliefs and opinions of these men, as declared by them in open Court, after a long and sustained cross-examination, which was carried out, as may be imagined, in a spirit the reverse of favourable to them. For, although they look upon "Sultan" Mohammed Shah as infinitely superior to the Sultan, or, indeed, to any other Sovereign in the whole world; yet, they do not impugn the right of the latter to rule over this country, to the laws of which they are submissive in every respect. Their real guilt consists in their denial of the Sultan's claim to the Iman-ship or Caliphate, which, of course, in a sense, is treasonable, although it is not a crime recognized by the Penal Code. The fact is, these men were, in reality, condemned in accordance with the provisions of the Shéri Law, a not uncommon occurrence, it would appear, when the President and Assessors of a criminal court can find no Article in the Penal Code which exactly fits the case on

which they are engaged. Moreover, there is a charge of raising taxes amongst themselves with a view to the remission of the proceeds to Bombay, to the truth of which they confessed. This, again, is tantamount to the establishment of an *Imperium in idmerio*, and may, I imagine, be regarded as treasonable, although I can find no article in the Penal Code which treats of such an action as a grave criminal offence.

On the whole, it would appear advisable that restraint should be placed on the Ismaïlians, but not with the degree of severity contemplated by the Court by which these sentences were passed.

In conclusion, I would state in correction of Mr. Monahan's despatch No. 75 of the 7th ultimo, that four men, viz., Ismaïl Ibn Mohammed, Nasr Ibn Mohammed, Adan-Ibn Khudhr, and Mohammed Ibn Mir Ahmed Saleb, have been sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment; four others, viz., Kasim Ibn Mohammed Tamir, Hajj Mustapha Tamir, Hussein Ibn Mohammed Werdi, and Hajj Khudr Beddûr, to ten years' imprisonment; and the rest (six) to three years' imprisonment, after public exposal to the whole city. In each case the prisoners are to be subjected to hard labour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—On making further inquiries I find that in the revised Turkish edition of the Ottoman Penal Code, viz., that of 1306 (1890) there is a very considerable difference in the wording of Article 55 of the Code compared with that of the same Article as it stands in the edition of 1289 (1873). It is with this latter edition, or rather, I should say, with Aristarchi's translation of this edition, that all Consulates are supplied.

In the revised version Article 55 begins with a sentence to the effect that any one proved to be guilty of entertaining an evil design towards the Sultan ("sou-i-Kassdi sebout boulan"), or of setting to work to carry out such an evil project ("vé yakhod ijrassiné teshebbus éyléyan"), is liable to the death penalty. This sentence does not exist in the old edition. Moreover, there is a whole paragraph in the revised version beginning "Zat-i-hazret-i-Padishahié," and ending "beda' etmek teshebbusdir," which is equally non-existent in the old version.

This paragraph is to the effect that any one found guilty of attempting to exercise real Sovereign power ("tesallut") is liable to confinement in a fortress for life, while should this guilty action be of a less grave character, his confinement should last for a term of years not less than five. Moreover, any one found guilty of slandering or libelling the Sultan is liable to a sentence of imprisonment from three months to three years. Any one proved guilty of attempting to change or alter the principle or former method of the Imperial Law of Succession, or to abolish such principle or law, renders himself liable to the death penalty. There is a final sentence to the effect that "attemping" or "setting to work to" ("teshabbus") means (from a legal point of view) to commence to carry out criminal project which has been formed.

I must apologize to your Excellency for going so much into detail on this point, but it may be that you are not aware of this very considerable and important divergence between the wordings of the two Articles. It the present instance it just makes all the difference to the accused persons because, whereas Article 55, as it formerly stood, cannot with any reason be quoted against them, the same Article, as it is now framed, may easily be twisted by a clever lawyer to cover the offence which they have committed.

W. S. R.

No. 166.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 329.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 12, 1903.

I HAVE carefully considered, in communication with the Secretary of State for India and the Board of Trade, your Excellency's despatch No. 642 of the 7th October last relative to the new Turkish Cattle Tax, and the question of whether it is leviable upon British subjects.

The course of action which you propose to follow, as reported in your despatch, is approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 167.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 14.)

(No. 810.)
Constantinople, December 8, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 752 of the 11th November, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Basra, reporting recent disturbances among Arab tribes at Amara and Nasrieh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 167.

Consul Crow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 75.)
Basra, November 10, 1903.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 69 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that a dispute occurred recently at Amara, between the tribes of Seyhood. Azerij, and Solagh, in regard to certain rice fields to which the former laid claim. The Mutessarif of Amara appears to have left matters to one Husni Effendi Bimbashi to settle, and the latter, acting on his own responsibility, proceeded against the Seyhood with the troops under his command, including some artillery. They opened fire on the tribe, with the result that many Arabs were killed. The official accounts state 180, but private information estimates the loss to be much greater—namely, 500 persons, including men, women, and children. I am unable at the present moment to certify to the correctness of these figures.

The Vali of Basra proceeded to Amara with 100 men and quelled the disturbances. He gave the land in dispute to the Seyhood to pacify them, and suspended the Mutessarif, who had returned to Basra. I am informed that Bimbashi Husni Effendi will be court-martialled for acting without instructions. The Seyhood are largely indebted to the Government for lands already leased to them, and the authorities being unable to collect the money, gave the disputed rice fields last year to the Azerij and Solagh. The Vali has now been compelled to reverse this decision, and there seems to have been much unnecessary bloodshed.

With regard to the disturbances at Nasrieh, mentioned in my telegram, Sadun Pasha of the Muteflh tribe has been collecting men for some time past. I am informed that an Arab tribe, presumably the Ubuda, refused to pay tribute to the Muteflh, and that Sadun Pasha proceeded against them with his followers to enforce payment. The Turkish military intervened, and Sadun Pasha retired and was pursued. He appears to have surrounded the Turkish troops pursuing him, and an engagement took place near Shatra, in with the Turks lost fifty men and six officers, including a Yuzbashi and a Col Agassi. Mohamed Fadil Pasha Daghestani was dispatched from Bagdad with a body of troops, and arrived at Nasrieh on the 6th instant. Sadun Pasha's cousins, Fadeh Pasha and Mizal Pasha, have left Basra to aid in pacifying the Muteflh.

There is an ironical significance in the fact that Captain Smythe, who is travelling along the proposed route of the Bagdad Railway with a Turkish escort, had to abandon his journey overland from Nedjeh to Basra, owing to the insecurity of the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

No. 168.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 19.)

(No. 661.)
Paris, December 18, 1903.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship will have noticed a telegram published by the "Times" of yesterday to the effect that a Syndicate under the control of the Deutsche Bank and others has taken over 2,000,000*l.* of Imperial Ottoman Loan for the purposes of the Bagdad Railway.

I have the honour to inclose a Memorandum by Mr. O'Beirne of information given to him by Baron Hottinguer on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.

Inclosure in No. 168.

Memorandum.

WITH reference to the telegram published by the "Times" of the 17th instant, to the effect that a Syndicate under the control of the Deutsche Bank and others had taken over 2,000,000*l.* of Imperial Ottoman Loan for the purposes of the Bagdad Railway, I understand from Baron Hottinguer that there is no intention, for the present at any rate, to attempt to float any part of the proposed loan in Paris. A loan of 4 per cent. is to be brought out in Germany, and Baron Hottinguer explained that it was expected that the profits of the emission would recoup the German houses interested for the expenses incurred in surveying the line to Bagdad, and for the incidental expenses incurred at Constantinople in connection with the Concession, which had been very heavy.

Baron Hottinguer said three French members, including M. Berger, had been elected to the Board of Administration. The French were now, in consequence of the unfavourable attitude of their Government, in a position of complete inferiority in the newly constituted Company; but they hoped to be able to assert their influence when the Germans found it necessary to come to France for money.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

December 18, 1903.

No. 169.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 21.)

(No. 831. Confidential.)
Constantinople, December 15, 1903.

My Lord,

DR. GWINNER, President of the Deutsche Bank, called upon me two days' ago, shortly after his arrival here, to preside at to-day's meeting of the Bagdad Railway Company.

After expressing his regret that his negotiations with the British Syndicate last spring had not resulted in their participation in the Bagdad Railway, he said that he attributed the breakdown entirely to the sudden ebullition of public opinion, which had deterred His Majesty's Government as well as the Syndicate from proceeding with the business. The anti-German feeling prevalent in England at that moment no doubt contributed to this result; but he believed that if the question had been fully explained to the British public, and they had been made aware of the conditions offered by the Deutsche Bank, their views would have been considerably altered, and the way left open for a resumption of negotiations at a future and not very distant date. The members of the British Syndicate did not wish to expose themselves to the ill-feeling consequent upon proceeding with negotiations, which were viewed so unfavourably both in political circles and in the city.

Sir Clinton Dawkins was already tainted by his connection with the Morgan group, who were at the moment unpopular on account of the shipping combine and Sir E. Cassel, who, though now a naturalized British subject, was at one time a German, was also in a delicate position. Lord Revelstoke was the only representative of English finance who had not some reason to proceed with extreme caution; but even he did not care to face the outcry which was set going by the "National Review" and other papers, who were clamouring for an understanding with Russia.

Mr. Gwinner proceeded to say that he had practically accepted the terms and conditions laid down in Sir E. Cassel's letter, and had agreed to amalgamate the Anatolian section in the Bagdad Railway. He had done so with the consent of his Government, and he had only altered a single word in Sir E. Cassel's proposals by substituting "Ottoman" before customs with reference to the Koweit terminus; and he was quite prepared, had he been pressed, to give up even this amendment. The Railway Company did not care in the least whether Koweit was a British Protectorate occupied by British

troops, but they were anxious to avoid goods and passengers being subjected to two Customs inspections as might be the case were they to have a Customs at Koweit and another somewhere in the desert outside the Koweit area.

I said that in face of the strong exhibition of public feeling which had no doubt, in great measure, prevented an understanding between the Syndicates, it seemed to me that there was still a way in which an arrangement could have been brought about to our mutual advantage, namely, by the Deutsche Bank consenting to give the construction of the Persian Gulf end to the British.

Mr. Gwinner replied that for his part he would have been quite willing to agree to this, but if he did so, he could not have been expected to give up the Anatolian section while leaving the Persian Gulf end to England. Apart from this, there was a political side to the question; and he was unable to say with certitude whether his Government would have been willing to agree to an arrangement which would be viewed with great displeasure by Russia, and possibly place them in a delicate position towards that Power.

Mr. Gwinner added that the French Government had declined to sanction the participation of the French group, and had refused a quotation on the Paris Bourse for their shares. The first meeting of the Bagdad Railway Company would be held on the 15th instant, when the Board of Directors and the Administrative Council would be chosen.

Dr. Gwinner evidently did not consider that the unofficial character of the participation of the French group affected materially the German position, or need cause them any anxiety.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 170.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 28.)

(No. 840. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 22, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, reporting on the recent incident which occurred at Alexandretta when the American Vice-Consul was roughly handled by the local authorities.

I may mention that the Sublime Porte, having informed the United States' Minister that the British and French Consular officers considered the action of the authorities justifiable, I referred, at Mr. Leishman's request, to Mr. Catoni for further information. The latter entirely denied the Porte's allegation, and reported the incident as described in Mr. Barnham's despatch.

I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, dated the 19th December, stating the United States' ship of war "San Francisco," with the United States' Consul at Alexandretta on board, had left for Alexandretta on the previous evening. It was only on hearing that the Admiral had started with the Consul on board that the Porte, who had up to then defended the conduct of the local authorities, and declined to offer any reparation, sent word to Mr. Leishman that the sub-Governor would e ordered to call and apologize to the Consul, and that the other persons concerned would be duly punished.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 170.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 71. Confidential.)
Sir, *Aleppo, December 10, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the Acting Vice-Consul at Alexandretta has reported an incident which occurred at that place on Friday, the 4th instant, and which has again brought the Ottoman authorities into collision with the United States' Government.

The facts throw an interesting light upon the strange conflict of authority which exists between the Vali, as representing the Porte, and the Harbour Police Commission, as secret agents of the Palace.

About four months ago an Armenian, naturalized and resident in America, named Attarian, obtained, through the State Department in Washington, permission from the Ottoman Government that his wife and son, then living at Kharpoor, should be allowed to join him in America. As soon as he received notice that this permission had been accorded, Attarian came to Alexandretta to meet his wife and son, but he had not provided himself with a proper passport, and shortly after his arrival at Aleppo he was arrested and lodged in prison.

He remained in prison two months, during which time the Legation negotiated his release, which was effected about a fortnight ago on the receipt of orders from the Porte that he should at once leave the country. Every assurance was given by the Vali to the American Vice-Consul here that the man would not be molested, and in due course he reached Alexandretta with the intention of embarking on the steam-ship "Assouan" of the Khedivial line.

The American Consul, Mr. Davis, put Attarian, his wife, and son into the Consular boat and, accompanied by his dragoman and cavasses, proceeded to escort them on board, but he first directed the boat to the custom-house pier, where he informed the authorities of his intention. A police officer then came forward and said that the travellers must first be disinfected, and the Consul having assented, the party landed. No sooner had Attarian entered the room where this process was to be carried out than the door was locked upon him, and the Consul informed that he would not be allowed to leave the country, as he was an Ottoman subject.

The cavasses then attempted to rescue the man, and a struggle took place, in which the police were assisted by soldiers encouraged by the military Commandant, and during the affair the Consul appears to hove been roughly handled. The latter now made a formal protest to the Kaïmakam who was present at the scene, and embarked on the Khedivial steamer for Beyrout after giving notice of his intention to refer the matter to the Consul-General and Admiral.

I recall other instances which have occurred during the past few years, when the harbour police have tried to prevent the departure of Armenians in spite of explicit orders received from the Porte, but these attempts were always frustrated by the superior strategy of the Consul who then occupied the post.

I am informed by the American Vice-Consul here that he has a precisely similar case in dispute with the Vali regarding another Armenian woman, whose departure for America to join her husband had been sanctioned by the Porte, but since this incident occurred the permission has been cancelled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 171.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 28)

(No. 842.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 23, 1903.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, pointing out the entirely French composition of the Jewish Colonization Association, which, nevertheless, enjoys the status of a British Company.

I have already had the honour, in my despatch No. 86 of the 13th March, 1900, to express to your Lordship how regrettable I think it that the Association whose interests are increasing and whose influence is exercised wholly in favour of the French is able to call upon the British authorities for assistance in its difficulties and disputes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 171.

Mr. Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 153.)

Beirout, December 3, 1903.

Sir,

I HAVE to inform your Excellency that during my absence this summer, a case, in which Mr. Sabbag and the Jewish Colonization Association were respectively plaintiff and defendants, came up for hearing before His Majesty's Consular Court in Beirout. The Society in question is duly registered as British, and Mr. Acting Consul-General Richards had, therefore, no alternative but to hear the case.

I may mention that it has now gone to the Supreme Court in Appeal, and at the same time the plaintiff in the late suit has given notice of a separate action in this Court. In these circumstances, and especially having regard to the increasing interests of the Jewish Colonization Association in this country, I have the honour to submit the following facts for your Excellency's consideration.

The Jewish Colonization Association is a purely French Society, and, I have reason to believe, procured for itself the benefits of registration as British, chiefly with the view of evading certain taxes which are levied on such bodies in France. But, whatever the motive, it seems that the end was obtained by the simple form of establishing an official, but purely nominal, head-quarters in London, its real administrative head-quarters remaining none the less in Paris.

I am also credibly informed that, excepting one or two (who are Poles), the members of the Governing Board are all Frenchmen. The same may be said of the Society's "employés."

Hitherto whenever difficulties have arisen either with the Turkish Government or with individuals, it has been the French Government, at the instance of Rothschild of France, who have intervened in favour of the Association. No British interests are concerned, and all the property stands in three names, viz., M. Leven (French), M. Plotke (German), and a third who is a Pole. There are a few British colonists, but no land in their names.

The Association (Société Anonyme) has no status as such in Turkish law, which only recognizes individuals; and, as I have shown, the individuals concerned in this case are without exception not British.

It seems to me therefore possible that there may be two opinions as to the right of the Association to claim the protection of His Majesty's Government in any litigation in which they may chance to involve themselves.

It is with this view that I have the honour to submit the above circumstances for your Excellency's consideration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 172.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December* 28.)

(No. 843.)

Constantinople, December 23, 1903.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 831, Confidential, of the 15th instant, and to previous correspondence on the subject of the Bagdad Railway, I have the honour to report that at a meeting of the "Conseil d'Administration de la Société Ottomane de Chemin de Fer de Bagdad," held on the 15th instant, eight additional directors of the Company were appointed, subject to ratification by the next general meeting.

M. Arthur Gwinner, Director of the Deutsche Bank, is President of the Board, and M. Testa, German Delegate on the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt, and M. Deffes, Director-General of the Ottoman Bank, have been named Vice-Presidents. The post of "Administrateur-Délégué" has been assigned to Dr. Kurt Zander, Director-General of the Anatolian Railway Company.

I inclose a complete list of the Board of Directors as at present constituted.

I understand that in consequence of the protest of Russia against the assignment of £T. 36,000 from the tithes of the Vilayet of Konia for the kilometric guarantee of the Bagdad Railway (those tithes being already engaged for the payment of the Russian war

indemnity), this security will be replaced by the assignment of other tithes, probably those of the Vilayet of Adana.

The Turkish Government have taken advantage of this fresh stage in the proceedings to obtain a loan of £T. 200,000 from the Deutsche Bank, of which £T. 100,000 is to be paid over at once. The loan is secured on the tithes surplus of next year, and is to bear 7 per cent. interest.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 172.

List of the Board of Directors of the Bagdad Railway.

President:

M. Arthur Gwinner, Director of the Deutsche Bank.

Vice-Presidents:

M. C. Testa, German Delegate on the Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt.
M. Deffès, Director-General of the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

Directors:

M. Vernes, of the Imperial Ottoman Bank.
M. Abegg-Arter, President of the "Société du Crédit Suisse."
M. G. Auboyneau, Director of the Ottoman Bank in Paris.
M. le Commandant Berger, French Delegate on the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt.
M. Huguenin, of the Anatolian Railway Company.
Count d'Arnoux, Director-General of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt.
M. Bauer, Director of the Vienna Bankverein.
M. Braunfels, of the firm of Jacob S. H. Stern, of Frankfort-on-Maine.
M. de Kaulla.
M. Kühlmann, of the Anatolian Railway.
M. de Naville.
M. Schrader, of Berlin.
M. Schwabach, partner in the firm of Bleichroeder, Berlin.
M. Steinthal, Director of the Deutsche Bank.
M. Turettini, Administrator of the "Union Financière" of Geneva.

Additional Directors; appointed December 15, 1903.

His Excellency Bedros Effendi Azarian.
M. Deffès (Vice-President).
M. Carlo Esterle, of Milan.
M. E. Eugenidi, of Constantinople, Banker.
His Excellency Hamdi Bey, Turkish Delegate on the Public Debt.
His Excellency Hoene Effendi.
His Excellence Pangiri Bey.
M. C. Weise.